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World Review

Incorporating Review of Reviews

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Windows to a New World

THE E. & S. C.W.S TEA WAREHOUSE, TRAFFORD WHARF ON THE MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL. DRAWN BY ROWLAND HILDER, R.I.

Tea trade history was made when in 1930 an enormous cargo of tea, no less than eight million pounds, direct from the East, was handled in the new blending and packing warehouse—the largest in the north of England—opened that year by the English and Scottish Joint C.W.S at Trafford Wharf on the Manchester Ship Canal.

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CWS

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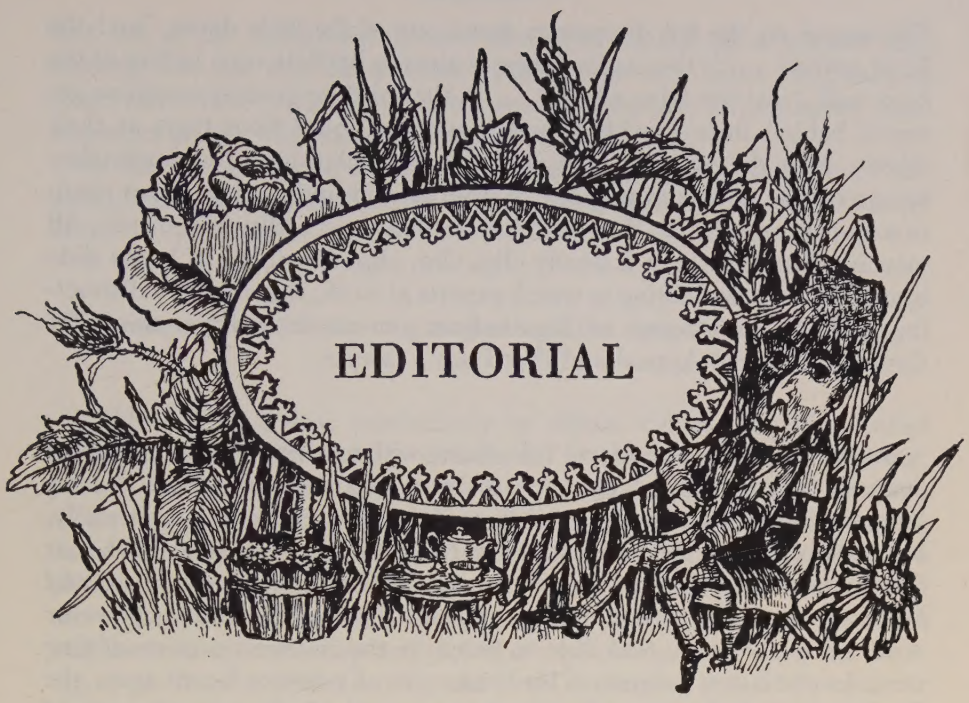

AS this is my first month as Editor of *World Review*, I thought it only right to introduce myself to readers of the magazine. I do not apologise for intruding, because an editor is bound to intrude. He is also bound to be criticised, and it will be easier to criticise me if I tell you what I have in mind.

As I make these notes, I struggle against the feeling that I am trying to write a letter in church; indeed, to all intents and purposes I am, for above me the rich tracery soars up to a clerestory where mingled light and dust filter down and I myself, after all, am sitting in a choir stall. ('The glory of Gothic is that it will do *anything*.') But, facing me, where there should be another bank of stalls, rises a massive curtain-wall of oak, flanked by outworks, and pierced by sally-ports. Above and behind this wall is the Bench, where all is calm. Against its base, lean three elderly men dressed as vergers. One of my learned friends is, as far as I can make out, trying to persuade the three judges on the Bench that another judge has somehow misdirected himself or a jury, or possibly both. 'May I refer your Lordships to the case of the Queen against Gompertz, reported in 9 Queen's Bench, page . . . '

The verger on the left disappears down one of the little doors, 'and the King against . . . '; the centre verger is already halfway up a ladder at the back wall, 'and the King against . . . '; the third verger has somehow got round behind their Lordships and is picking books from trays at their elbows. Now the two first ones are back, each clasping three books; they swarm up the front and pop one in front of each judge, then down again to scamper from shelf to shelf with the certainty and agility of squirrels. All morning there has been a steady clip, clip, clip, as triplets of books slide into place. It is fascinating to watch experts at work; it is also very distracting, so I will not attempt to disguise from you any longer that this is the Court of Criminal Appeal and that I am a lawyer.

Are lawyers fit to be editors? I do claim, with modesty I hope, that some years of practice have taught me things which must be of use. I have learned to listen to stories, or read them if they are sent in to me, carefully, impartially, and to the end. In *Weir of Hermiston*, the only great book that Stevenson ever wrote (and he had to wait for that until his old nurse and his father died), Stevenson makes the point that old Hermiston, however cruel he might seem, was able to listen to the involved and stumbling remarks of his son because of his 'vast store of patience learnt upon the Bench' (though he was often 'nearer voamiting' than anyone would fancy). I do not, of course, compare my patience, or anything else, with that of His Majesty's Judges. I am only trying to show how a legal training can help: you learn to listen as well as to talk. I would remind you, too, that your liberties were won for you by Thomas More, Coke, Pym and other narrow-minded and cantankerous lawyers of the past, and that the great lawyers on the Bench are the active defenders of them at present.

In the Army I learned not to be surprised at what human beings can endure. In the Law I have learned not to be surprised at anything human beings will do. I have met an elderly lady with a fur tippet who brained her middle-aged son with an Indian club 'to save him from the neighbours.' There was another woman whose husband kicked her in the face on their wedding night when she knelt down to say her prayers. She put up with it then, and every night for years. It was only when her husband started scraping burnt toast over the clean sink that she decided she could not go on, and petitioned for divorce. I remember a man who worked in a chocolate factory. He filled a suitcase with hot liquid chocolate and, when it cooled, tried to take it home. It was too heavy for him to manage, but it made a wonderful exhibit. I have seen a pair of dummy binoculars, beautifully made at home; when you turned the view-finder, two needles

shot out of the eye-pieces. I have also been cursed by a woman who claimed that she was the seventh child of a seventh child and that her curses never failed. I hope, though I am not sure, that having heard these and other truths will make me a good judge of fiction.

All this does not mean that I have no prejudices. I have many, and I can only hope by a show of apparent honesty to reconcile you to them little by little.

To resume, *World Review* is a magazine of the Arts, Politics and Law.

THE ARTS today, particularly in official circles, are often called Culture. Culture, of course, consists of music, architecture, painting, poetry, drama, cups and saucers of a certain pattern, and so forth, and not of recorded broadcasts, lectures, evaluations, revaluations, centenaries, notes and critical approaches. You will forgive me if you find this too obvious to need saying, and yet it seems to me that if it is not remembered more often, our civilisation will make a poor showing when its potsherds and barrows are turned up and picked over. Nobody now regrets the burning of the library of Alexandria, and yet it contained, by all accounts, the largest collection of critical works ever made, most of them State-subsidised. I shall do my best then to print original works of all kinds and to draw attention to new writers, painters and musicians, or to older ones who are still unmoved by the temptation to become critics and bystanders. I have made a start with Bernard Wall's guide to the new Italian writers, and I hope later to print a translation of a story he mentions, 'The Green Coat', by Mario Soldati. There will be new drawings by Robin Ironside, articles on the painters Cecil Collins and Robert Medley, and the Italian peasant-sculptor Sani, on Darius Millaud and on the newest name in French music, Pierre Boulez. Boulez stood up in the gallery at a concert of classical repertoire and shouted *C'est de la* . . . . This, for a French artist, is of course traditional—as was his language—but Boulez' scores, which are now available for the first time, are not traditional.

About THE LAW, I believe I have already said enough. I think you will, however, enjoy and profit by some new short stories by Henry Cecil that I shall print in the coming months and which will show the Judge, the Jury and the accused in a new and uncomfortable light. I hope, too, that you will profit by any change in the present system of leaseholds that may be made by Parliament. The Leasehold Reform Committee, under the chairmanship of Lord Justice Jenkins, has now made its final report. It is

a subject of great complexity, as the Attorney-General told those members of his party who were pressing for immediate legislation. It is difficult to discover just what those members wanted except, generally, that landlords should be suppressed and leaseholds should be transformed into freeholds. Even in that they are not consistent, for the very same members are the strongest supporters of the Government's policy of building houses to let and not to sell. Reforms in our system of leasehold tenure may benefit individual tenants whose leases are falling in, but they can have no effect on the housing conditions as a whole.

The really alarming thing about Labour back-benchers is that they are still living in a world that died thirty years ago: they refuse to recognise that the problem landlord today is not the rich one, but the poor and worried one who would be only too glad to sell his rent-protected property if he could find a buyer. Even if the Minister of Health was doing as well as he says he is, it still remains true that old houses are wearing out into slums quicker than new ones are being built. The mental time-lag of the Labour Party worries the Opposition less than might be expected, because it, too, is living in a world that has passed away (the proposal of the National Federation of Property Owners is simply to raise all rents by fifty per cent without any right of appeal for the tenants), and thus the whole country is being governed at one remove. If the Socialists picture thousands of rack-renting landlords in top-hats, the Conservatives picture millions of honest, decent 'little men' settling down with a pipe of 'baccy (for pipes are still a symbol of honesty), resenting interference and craving to be recognised as individuals. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the majority of people are not likely to recognise this dangerous situation as they are perfectly content with being thirty years behind the times, and with talking vaguely of the necessity of reforms which have been made ten or more years ago.

POLITICS are most easily followed by the study of personalities, but it is fashionable now to approach them through history. You have in this issue, therefore, two articles on the history of politics. Most of us have a feeling or twinge from time to time that this country is no longer a democracy. Lord Cecil contends that our political system is developing in such a way that in any case a democracy is no longer possible. A Bill to preserve some of our civil liberties was recently introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Samuel and his colleagues and was promptly cut to pieces by the Lord Chancellor. I would like to think that such a Bill was not necessary.

Bertrand Russell in his article on fanaticism is developing one of the themes of his *History of Western Philosophy* that each party to any dispute which persists through long periods of time is partly right and partly wrong. His suggestion, which has a grand simplicity, is that we should admit this, and I think that anyone who enjoys the spectacle of a mind working clearly will enjoy his methods of argument.

Allowing myself to dwell on this for a moment, I can imagine an army, with what appears to be adequate air and naval support, fighting an ideological war to persuade another power that it was partly right and partly wrong. How difficult would be the propaganda for such a war! ('This is the Voice of Half Truth, talking to what we believe to be the misguided peoples of the world.') This army would be known as an International Police Force, in order to make it sound less warlike. It would, unfortunately, also *be* less warlike, the commanders having forgotten that whatever weapons are invented, or held back for fear the other side might use them too, nothing will ever make it possible to conduct a campaign without fighting, and this needs infantry who are trained and willing to attack other infantry and not to run away when they see a tank. This seems a suitable place to mention some real soldiers. *World Review* sincerely and gratefully congratulates the Coldstream Regiment of Foot Guards on the 300th anniversary of its raising by General Monk.

Looking back over these notes on Law and Politics, I am afraid I have given way to a melancholy bias. If this is so, I must apologise, for this is *World Review's* holiday number.

DESMOND FITZGERALD

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I.C.A.

A NEW ARTS CENTRE IN LONDON

During the first two years of its existence the Institute of Contemporary Arts has had to lead a nomadic life, having nothing but a small office it could call its own. It has had to use twenty different halls in London for its numerous activities and count upon the ingenuity of its members to find their way to new addresses. These functions have been well attended by enthusiastic audiences and have failed only in that they could give members no more than a sporadic sensation of the main purpose of the Institute, which is to found a centre where the arts can mingle and where artists of all kinds can meet each other and their public.

The first step in establishing the Institute on a scale comparable to the Museum of Modern Art in New York and capable of fulfilling the needs of a similar foundation in London has at last been achieved. The entire first floor of 17-18 Dover Street, Piccadilly, W.1, has been acquired by the Institute. The premises consist of a large, well-lit room overlooking Dover Street, which will be used for exhibitions, recitals of chamber music, poetry and drama, lectures, discussion and film shows; an adjoining room is being equipped as a club and reading room with library and bar, and the offices of the Institute occupy a room at the back.

It has been decided to open part of the premises before the decorations have been finished and close for six weeks during the holidays for their completion.

The first exhibition was 'James Joyce, his sources and Development', which opened mid-June, followed by 'Symbolic Realism in American Painting', in July and August.

The greatest proof of success for the Institute will be for its membership to increase so rapidly that it will be able to acquire even better and more commodious premises. It is hoped that all those who value a vigorous and creative atmosphere in which the arts can flourish in London will respond immediately. ROLAND PENROSE

Write to the Director, I.C.A.,
17–18 Dover Street, W.1. Gro. 6186

HENRY RAYNOR

WORLD AND TWO LIVES

The road leaned down a brief and clumsy hill,
Small houses and the drab mill wall, the tall
Chimney and the cobbled mill-yard, where the bell
Marked each day's periods and set the clogs
Ringing upon the smooth irregular stones;
The road ran to a garden: two tall trees,
Worn and anaemic grass, convolvulus
Climbing the crooked walls. The narrow road
Pointed across the garden to a room.
Life was outside the window, and the Child
Watched avidly.

There, on the bed, stretched still,
The Woman, eyes contented with the walls,
The souvenirs of holidays, the few
Pictures of friends framed for companionship,
Rested, confined to this brief space, nor looked
Upon the window screen where seasons showed,
Where action passed and world whirled on its way.

Her life was gathered to this focal point,
Contracted from the mill-yard and the road
To this small quiet room. The casual
Resources of a common life—the books,
The neighbours talking in the corner shop,
Midday processions, jug in hand, towards
The Public House beyond His line of sight—

These were no more for Her. Her life was spent
Within the pallid head, behind refined
Features that pain had carved, a face made calm
By long defeat, made beautiful at last
By Her concentred energies. She had no way
Out of the tiny brain, only, for Her,
Continual turning of the treadmill, thought
Driving towards conclusions never guessed
Nor ever heard by others, broken by
Return at evening from the factories
Of sisters, broken by
The Child's swift questions, broken by the hours
Of partial sleeping. To the Child it seemed
That She was Patience: She was Wisdom, too,
Source of a certain knowledge, Kindliness.

They would be thus—Her eyes still on the flowers
Of dingy paper masking Her world's wall,
His searching for a movement in the world
Withdrawn from Her awareness—many hours.
With ears alert, the sound of footsteps nearing would awake
His pirate curiosity, He'd give
A name to footsteps, wager with himself
That one or other neighbour soon would come
Upon his empty stage, enter the shop, emerge
With bread or paper bags, so He could guess
Their contents, drive His mind beyond
The screen and find a way upon His stage,
Not there to act but there to know, partake
In general action, in the lives of men.

Life passed outside the window, and the Child
Watched avidly from His suspended place
In no world of His own, an alien
From Her subdued experience of pain
He did not know as pain, not having part
Amongst the raucous voices and the clogs
Beating uneven cobbles. But she was satisfied
Within the silent room, watching a single rose
Patterned on paper, a long eternal flower
Engrossed in its insentience. It was there,
Surrounded by Her love, watching the world
Pass on its lighted frame, He learnt to know
His heart's intolerable loneliness.

Then the pale sky would streak and burn, the sun
On winter evenings golden on gaunt walls,
The careless lights in other windows gleam:
'Look,' He would say, 'the lights are coming on!'
The lamplighter, with curious rods, would come
And set a star to burn outside the shop,
Another Person enter their still room,
Light the mild gas-light, draw the blind to close;
The world was over for another day.

THE OLD COUNTRY

I KNOW an island slowly turning
As slowly as the fungus grows.
I know an island,
The Trinity land
With the green stem too long for
holding.

I know an island slowly turning:
Slowly the water gathers the pebbles
On the sea bed,
Slowly the eyes of earth decay
Leaving the island blind and tossing.

Wild is the hag
Screaming on the blood mountain
And the Shannon runs red
With the blue blood of stone builders,
Building without eyes, without faces.
Was there a man,
A man of clean speaking and strange
notions?

Is there a man,
Coldly showing the dead eye?
Slowly, slowly the stars come down.
I know an island slowly turning
And cold cold runs the Dodder
While the withered drink noothmeg
vintage

In a Chalice saloon.
Slowly, slowly, the stars come down.

Once upon a time—but not any more—
For now O'Connell's Street is a
Liberator's statue

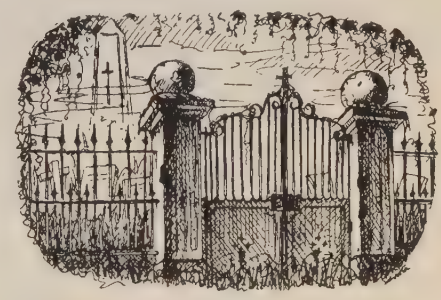
Tolerated by Nelson's sixpenny high
column.

The leagues and Gaelic counter leagues
Weep over a dead heritage.

The Fiannas lie still
And weep with the makers on Fire Hill.
Glasnevin sleeps—as the dead should—
But the old gates are rusted
And rain makes weeds in the stable of a
Republic.

There was a bad day but I remembered
the glory,

But now the colours are fading,
The seas are meeting
Where the salt bones have died
And I speak from no safe harbour.



I know an island slowly turning
And slowly the sea hunger feeds from
Trinity Island.

Soon the anchors will leave the river
mud behind

And soon now there will be nothing,
Nothing at all
Only green groping on the ocean's
hard face.

PATRICK GALVIN

A CHARM AGAINST A SUDDEN PAIN IN THE STOMACH

(from the Anglo-Saxon)

Recipe: *Feverfew, the red nettles that grow on the roof, and dock leaves, stew them in butter*

Loud were they, lo, loud, when over hill they rode,
They were resolute when over land they rode,
Shield thee now and dodge their malice.
Out, little spear, if thou art inside me!
It stood under shield, under bright shield,
When the witch brewed up her spells
And when she threw her hissing spears;
I will send one back to her
A flying arrow, as good as she gave;
Out, little spear, if thou art inside me!
The blacksmith sat and forged a little dagger
Beaten many times with iron;
Out, little spear, if thou art inside me!
Six smiths sat and wrought a murderspear—
Out, spear! Don't be in me, spear!
If inside me is a piece of iron
The work of a witch, it shall melt away.
If thou wert in skin shot, or were in flesh shot
Or in the blood shot,
Or were in limb shot, may thy life go free and easy.
If it was gods' shot, or if it were dwarfs' shot
Or if it was hags' shot, now will I help thee,
This is the cure for godshot, this is the cure for dwarfshot,
This is the cure for hagshot; I will help thee.
Fly over the mountaintops!
Be thou well; the Lord help thee!

Apply the medicine to the affected part

THE FEW AND THE MIGHTY

VISCOUNT CECIL OF CHELWOOD

A FEW weeks ago I moved a Resolution in the House of Lords 'that the growing power of the Cabinet is a danger to the democratic constitution of the country.' I did so in pursuance of a general and very beneficial custom in our country that alterations in its methods of Government should be made openly in the sight of all men. It is particularly necessary in a time of crisis. The changes in the governments of the States of Europe during my lifetime have been greater than any that have ever taken place in a similar period. Fifty years ago the dominant form of government in Europe was monarchical; now kings are a rarity and absolute kings no longer exist. They have been succeeded in some countries by tyrannical oligarchies, developing into the totalitarian governments of which we hear so much. In our country we have moved slowly in the same direction.

The two European wars greatly increased this tendency here. For the purpose of fighting a life and death struggle, it was obviously necessary greatly to increase the powers of the central government. But it was recognised that such a system was a danger to those liberties for which we had fought throughout our history and which were protected by our Constitutional Democracy—the greatest of our safeguards against revolution and tyranny.

In some countries the conception of government of the people by the people for the people has perished altogether. If any forms of election are maintained, it is only on the terms that the voters vote as the government directs. Fortunately we have not imitated these unhappy precedents, but, none the less, they are important to us because it has in our history often been the case that what has happened on the other side of the Channel has been followed, generally with considerable modifications, by the course of events in this country. We have moved in the same direction but not so fast, or so far, as Continental Europe. So now I think it is true to say that there has been here a growing tendency to undervalue personal freedom and to substitute the group for the individual. We have seen many instances of that. For example, in our industrial development we have moved from the old idea of individual employer and workman to limited companies, and

from them to great amalgamations or cartels, and to meet them great Trade Unions, organised on the same lines. This substitution has brought a diminution of the sense of responsibility. The numbers employed in each undertaking have been greatly increased and therefore the influence of each individual has diminished. So, too, the spirit of the craftsman directed by the artist has almost disappeared.

In politics the tendency seems to me to have gone still further and with still less satisfactory results. I readily admit that the great changes that were made during the nineteenth century, following the Reform Bills of 1832, 1867, and 1884, were on the whole beneficial. No doubt it was right to free Members of Parliament and others from the system under which the government of the country could only be carried on with the help of bribery and intimidation, and it was an immense advantage to make them and their electors more or less independent of these motives. That was a great gain. No doubt there were still many serious defects in the social and industrial conditions of the country, though these were improving. But as an instrument of government I doubt if the House of Commons has ever been more admirable than it was in the middle or end of the nineteenth century. Its members were, for the most part, genuinely representative of those by whom they were elected. They were entrusted by them with the power and the duty to represent not only the interests of their constituency but also the interests of the State as a whole, and they discharged that duty with a great sense of responsibility and a full appreciation of the importance of the work in which they were engaged. But the numbers of the electorate grew, and it became inevitable that the organisation of the voters should be improved. I can remember very well some of the stages by which political organisations were developed. The old idea of candidates going round and personally canvassing the voters became impracticable with the increase of the number of electors and instead of that, in every district, in every village and in every industry, committees sprang up whose business it was to bring the voters to the poll. This system developed into what was then called the 'caucus' system—an elaborate organisation of the electorate by political committees—which was adopted first by one party and then by another, until it became essential to political life and spread over the whole country.

And so it has happened, as we saw in the last election, that the individuality of all candidates has become submerged in their membership of one party or another and we reached the position that no one who was not a member of a party had the least chance of election. The Caucus reigned supreme. Some of my friends were pleased because the result has been particularly fatal to those with Communist sympathies. But I beg them to look a little more closely at the matter. It is quite true that no Communist had a chance of election and that was a result in itself to be approved. But it has been at the cost of seriously lessening the importance and

independence of membership of the House of Commons. The quality of candidates and the influence of the individual M.P. count for less and less, and the threat to democracy grows increasingly severe. A good observer says:

> 'The major decisions of State are made outside the House of Commons —in the Cabinet room, in the Government departments, in the party meeting, in Transport House, everywhere but in Parliament. Parliament, that is, the House of Commons, is rapidly becoming merely the official means by which decisions made by these bodies or by individual Ministers receive automatic endorsement.'

That is undoubtedly one result of political organisation. It has excluded from the Parliament all independent Members. It is perhaps worth a glance to see what might have happened if it had been in operation in times past. A good many distinguished persons would have been excluded. That would have been true in the case, for instance, of Disraeli, of Gladstone, of Peel, of great figures like Lord Derby, of my father, of Lord Hartington, of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, and of Mr. Winston Churchill—and there are no doubt others of whom it would have been equally true. All those men at some time or another voted against their Party. I don't say that the loss of them would have been fatal to the prosperity of the country, but I do say it is a matter for serious consideration, a warning of what may happen in the future. It seems to me that if the excessive domination of Party goes on, we are bound to have an increasing concentration of power in the hands of the administration, that is, the Cabinet, which will tend more and more to be an oligarchy consisting of individuals who, by political docility, have earned the approval of those who have control of the Party organisation.

I know that any argument of this kind is always answered by saying that after all the members of the House of Commons represent the electorate, and if the electorate disapprove of their subservience to the government, they can be rejected. But that is not really true. In practice the electorate cannot chose just anyone; they must chose a candidate put forward by some organisation. Moreover, if they dislike the behaviour of their Member, a constituency can do nothing until there is another General Election. The truth is that under our present Constitution, when the Cabinet is once in power, there is no way of controlling it. Let me give an instance of what I mean. By the Parliament Act of 1911, the life of Parliament is limited to five years and it is impressively said that no alteration to that limit is to take place by the procedure under the Act, which means, I presume, without the consent of both Houses. But in the late Parliament a procedure was established which makes nonsense of that and all other similar precautions. By the Act of 1911, no Bill could be passed without the consent of the House of Lords unless it had been passed three times by the House of Commons at stated intervals. But all that was disregarded by the will of

the House of Commons alone. Three was reduced to two and the intervals correspondingly altered, and not only so, but the new periods were applied to the Steel Bill, in spite of the fact that it had not been introduced till after the last Parliament had begun. That made a most dangerous precedent. It was an alteration of the Act of 1911 without any reference to the electors. Do not forget that the Act of 1911 had received the express support of the electors at a special General Election before it became law. No alteration should have been made in it behind their backs. It is no doubt technically true that no Parliament can bind a future Parliament and that made the Steel Bill manœuvre practicable. But it is also true that our Constitution is workable only because general understandings of reasonable fairness are accepted by all parties. I say deliberately that the Steel Bill proceedings constituted a definite breach of such an understanding and created a precedent by which single-chamber government could be established and made permanent without any recourse to the electorate. All the precautions on which we were bidden to rely in 1911 have been in effect swept away.

I was reading the other day a new history of France in which, among other things, the outbreak of the French Revolution is described. The author insists that no one in France believed that a revolution was in progress till it had actually occurred and the Paris mob, led by the Jacobins, had established the Reign of Terror. Such an event seems incredible to us here. But we must consider carefully where we are. The whole central executive power is now vested in the Cabinet. It has the control not only of the ordinary functions of the government departments, including the Armed Forces and the London police, but year by year new activities are entrusted to it. Every session fresh powers are given to the executive Government, usually without any appeal. Nor should we forget the various Nationalisation Acts, which, under cover of handing over some of our greatest industries to the Nation, really put them under the authority of different committees appointed by the Government. So that the position is this: the Cabinet, appointed by the Prime Minister, have dictatorial powers over the whole administrative functions of the Government and the Prime Minister is answerable only to the majority of the House of Commons. Further, the membership of that majority owe their position, as has been pointed out, to the political organisation of the Party of which the Prime Minister is the chief. If any members show a disposition to take an independent line, intimation is conveyed to them that they will not be the Party candidates at the next election. Even if any of them are supported by the local organisation which originally chose them, that support will disappear under pressure from London.

My readers may perhaps say that, after all, there is the control of the House of Lords, limited though that is. Until its power is still further

reduced, it can impose delay, if no more, on revolutionary legislative proposals. But even that power is, by the procedure employed in the last Parliament, at the mercy of a Party majority in the House of Commons. That brings me to a very important consideration. Under our Constitution, the ultimate sovereignty rests—and should rest—with the people and not with the two Houses of Parliament, and it is only so far as those Houses have been given authority by the electors that they have any right to speak for the democracy. The House of Commons claims that right because it is elected. Even so, it may happen, and, indeed, it very often does happen, that after a year or two the electors change their minds and the House no longer represents their views. Or it may happen that a House of Commons elected for one purpose tries to use its powers for another. It is for that reason, among others, that in our country and in most other democratic countries, a Second Chamber exists to ensure that the rights of the people are respected, and in our country to insist, if there is any doubt about it, that the people shall be consulted. That is the true function of the House of Lords. Its weakness is that it has no direct authority from the people. It is quite true that for much of its work that does not matter. Most of the time of the House, and particularly of the more active members of the House, is spent on the discussion of matters which are very important, such as questions of Foreign and Imperial policy, and those legislative proposals on which no Party political question arises. For all of that work I believe the House is admirably composed. It contains distinguished representatives of every aspect of our national life. It is no doubt a fact that many of the peers hold their position because they are the sons of their fathers. But they may be fairly regarded as good average citizens, and the fact that they have a distinguished father or a grandfather does not make them less so.

For the purposes, therefore, of discussion and suggestion, the present House seems to me admirably constituted. But for the purpose of controlling revolutionary legislation, it has one grave, and, I think fatal, defect. It has, as at present constituted, a permanent Conservative majority. That does not much matter in the case of proposals raising no Party question. But if a measure desired by Left opinion in the country passes the House of Commons, it may fail to secure the approval of the House of Lords; whereas if it is a measure supported by the Right, it will, as a matter of course, be approved by the Lords. That is not only unfair, but it means that in the end the authority of the Second Chamber will not be sufficient to ensure that really revolutionary proposals shall be referred to the judgment of the people.

It was to remedy this defect in our Constitution that the Parliament Act of 1911 was passed. Its purpose was to limit the powers of the Second Chamber so that it should not be possible for it to reject measures for which the electorate had shown their desire. That was the central purpose of that

Act. Unfortunately, the rather complicated machinery designed for that object can be used, as was shown by the proceedings of the last Parliament, so as to enable the House of Commons to destroy the Second Chamber's powers in whole or in part without any reference to the electorate. In other words, we are now living under a Constitution which any House of Commons, however elected, can convert into single-chamber Government. That seems to me a dangerous state of affairs under any circumstances. We live at a time when revolutionary changes have been carried out in several countries by the unscrupulous use of powers never intended for that purpose. That may or may not happen here. All that can be said with certainty is that in other countries revolutionary changes have taken place involving very serious injury to the civil and religious liberty of the people by an unscrupulous minority against the wills of the great majority of their future citizens.

What, then, is the present position? We have a Second Chamber which does most of its work in a way that commends general approval. Its discussions on all sorts of public questions of importance are admittedly excellent —as, indeed, they should be—since the House has at its service men of great experience and ability in all sections of our people. In any military matters it can hear the views of some of our greatest soldiers; or, if it is a question affecting the Navy or the Air Force, men of like authority in these services are available. Its legal members command universal respect, as was shown in the debates on Capital Punishment. In religious matters the House is advised by eminent theologians. In Foreign Affairs several ex-Foreign Ministers, ex-Ambassadors from many countries and distinguished diplomats of various kinds are ready to help the House, and on commercial and financial matters a formidable galaxy of talent can be consulted. So it is with other matters; professors of science, literature, medicine, and other subjects, contribute opinions of value; and this army of experts is, if I may so put it, diluted with a number of individuals who, without being specialists, are possessors of that saving common sense to which we have always, and rightly, trusted in this country.

Therefore, for the purposes of consideration, discussion and advice, I do not think it would be easy to improve on the present House of Lords. It is only in controversial legislation, whether by Statute or by Orders, that with our political and democratic government we cannot afford to disregard Party considerations. I would therefore suggest that for general purposes the House should be kept substantially as it is, with all its great traditions and atmosphere, but, in order to deal with legislative matters, only those peers should vote who have been selected for the purpose. They might be already members of the House, or they might be given non-permanent peerages. To ensure that they should represent the political views of the country, they should be chosen by proportional representation of the

members of the House of Commons, and to provide that they should not be merely nominees of the minority of any one Parliament but should represent the settled views of the electorate, one half or one third of them should be chosen by each House of Commons immediately after a General Election. In this way there would be a section of the House of Lords who would alone have power to deal with legislative matters and would owe their authority to the decision of the elected representatives of the people.

I will not go in detail into the machinery required to set up this arrangement. But I am satisfied it would not have to be complicated or elaborate. One point may be added. Though only those chosen for the purpose would be legislative Peers and have the right to vote on legislation, the other Peers might, if they wished, take part in the debates leading up to the vote. In that way the ancient historic peerage would remain, the difficulty about Party affiliation would be avoided, and a serious safeguard would be established to prevent great legislative changes being made behind the backs of the electorate. Above all, an effective check would be put on the growing oligarchy of the Cabinet.

THE FANATICS

BERTRAND RUSSELL

THE most bitter struggles between different groups of mankind have been caused by one or more of three differences: of economic interest, of race, or of creed. In the First World War, only economic interest was concerned; in the Second, economic interest and creed. In the Third, if it comes, economic interest, race, and creed will all be involved. I wish to consider differences of creed as a source of conflict, first historically, and then in the present day.

The word 'ideology', which is now common, means the same thing as was formerly meant by 'creed'. An 'ideology' may be defined as a system of beliefs leading to a line of conduct, both public and private, and supported, whenever it is politically important, by a priesthood or something analogous. The word was brought into general use by Napoleon, who objected to what he called 'idéologues', because in his day they were mostly republican. I shall use the word 'ideology', as practically synonymous with

the word 'creed', but with slightly less implication of dogmatic definiteness. One can speak of the 'ideology' of American capitalism, but it would be stretching the use of words to call it a 'creed'.

Differences of creed are not necessarily a cause of strife; they only become so when they are combined with fanatical intolerance. Buddhism came to China and Japan peaceably, without disturbing the ancient religions of those countries. No one in either China or Japan thought that only one religion could be true. The Chinese came to believe in both Buddhism and Confucianism, the Japanese in both Buddhism and Shinto. In the Graeco-Roman world, similar views were generally held. The Romans identified their gods with those of Greece. Temples to Egyptian and Babylonian gods were built in Rome. The worship of Mithra was allowed to spread freely, and people who took to worshipping foreign gods did not on that account reject their native religions.

Wars of religion began with the rise of Mohammedanism. The Moslems, like the Christians and Jews, held that there could be only one true faith. They were less intolerant than the Christians, but sufficiently so to make any genuine peace between Christian and Moslem states impossible.

All through the Middle Ages, war was used as an ideological weapon. Charlemagne converted the Saxons by massacring those who showed a reluctance to be baptised. The Templars and Knights of St. John fought the Moslems. The third Crusade turned its arms against the Greek Orthodox Church. Simon de Montfort exterminated the Albigensian heretics. Henry V and the Council of Constance burned the followers of Wycliffe. In Spain the Jews and Moors were first persecuted and then expelled. In the Balkans the Bogomil heresy was rooted out.

But all these wars and persecutions sank into insignificance by comparison with the wars of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Everywhere throughout what had been Catholic Europe the religion of the reigning sovereign, whichever it happened to be, was enforced with such severe penalties that the great majority acquiesced. Both sides held that it is right to assassinate a monarch of the opposite party; Guy Fawkes attempted it on behalf of the Catholics, and Ravaillac succeeded on behalf of the Protestants. Charles I's head was cut off, and Cromwell's body was hung in chains. The Thirty Years' War halved the population of Germany, but made almost no change in the balance of forces. At length, in view of the inconclusiveness of the struggle, a few enlightened nations, led by the Dutch, discovered that it was possible for Protestants and Catholics to live peaceably side by side. English fanatics had fled to America to escape persecution, and were able there to perpetuate the evil practices, objection to which had caused them to leave England. But persecution in America ceased towards the end of the seventeenth century, except in the comparatively mild form in which it still subsists. In Catholic

countries religious persecution persisted until the French Revolution, after which political passions took its place.

Some opponents of Communism are attempting to produce an ideology for the Atlantic Powers, and for this purpose they have invented what they call 'Western values'. These are supposed to consist of toleration, respect for individual liberty, and brotherly love. I am afraid this view is grossly unhistorical. If we compare Europe with other continents, it is marked out as the persecuting continent. Persecution only ceased after long and bitter experience of its futility; it continued as long as either Protestants or Catholics had any hope of exterminating the opposite party. The European record in this respect is far blacker than that of the Mohammedans, the Indians, or the Chinese. No, if the West can claim superiority in anything, it is not in moral values but in science and scientific technique.

In the Book of Judges it says from time to time: 'And the land had rest forty years.' The land of Europe had rest ninety-nine years, from 1815 to 1914. True, there were several Russo-Turkish wars; there was the Crimean War; there were Bismarck's three wars; there was the Boer War, and at the end of the period there was the Russo-Japanese war; but none of these produced at the time any profound upheaval, and none of them gave rise to a feeling of general insecurity such as now haunts us even in our dreams.

I was forty-two when this era of tranquillity ended. All of us who grew up at that time took for granted, almost without conscious thought, that the nineteenth century had set the pattern for the future. It had seen great changes, almost all beneficent; we expected more changes of the same sort. The practice of toleration, liberty, and enlightenment had spread with astonishing rapidity. Nobody thought of the nineteenth century as a brief and exceptional interlude between two dark ages. Looking back, it is clear that we ought to have foreseen coming troubles: over-population, the end of great undeveloped food-producing areas, the bitter competition produced by the spread of industrialism in a number of countries all avid for power, the intoxication caused by Western ideas in intellectuals belonging to countries with other traditions and other circumstances. All this we ought to have foreseen, but we did not, and so, when war came, we found ourselves in a world for which we were intellectually and imaginatively unprepared. Our statesmen found old maxims inapplicable, but could not think of new ones. Blindly the nations blundered on from folly to folly. If we are to understand our own time, we must find the key to it, not in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but in earlier, wilder, and darker epochs.

So far as ideologies are concerned, the troubles of our time show themselves in an increase of fanaticism. There was of course fanaticism in the period which now seems in retrospect to have been comparatively free from it. There was fanaticism in the French Revolution, but it was in control for

only about two years. There was fanaticism in the German resistance to Napoleon, but it seemed to die down after 1815. There was fanaticism on both sides in the American Civil War and in the struggle between Russian revolutionaries and the Tsardom. But except in Russia the fanatics never seemed to gain control for any length of time.

Since 1914—largely, I think, as a result of the sufferings caused by war—we have seen fanaticism of various kinds controlling governments and making sensible statesmanship impossible. There was anti-German fanaticism in the years during and after the First World War; there was answering German fanaticism, leading to the victory of the Nazis. There was anti-Semitic fanaticism, with the inevitable response of Zionist fanaticism. Most important of all, there was, and is, Communist and anti-Communist fanaticism. While mankind remain in this temper, the sort of co-operation required for stable peace is clearly out of the question.

The fanaticism which characterises the Communist party at the present day arises from a combination of two forces: the doctrines of Marx, and the traditions of Russia. Something must be said about both.

The dynamic force of the doctrine, both in Marx and in his followers, was derived from hatred—illogically, since (in his view) the barbarities of the capitalists were fated, and were not due to their individual wickedness. His views were largely derived from a study of British factory workers in the early forties—a horrible period of child labour and famine artificially induced by the Corn Laws. Hatred was a natural reaction, but what Marx did was to erect hatred into a cosmic principle and the source of all progress. Naturally the propertied classes, wherever his creed was spread, were terrified into violent reaction, and the vague, good-natured liberalism of the middle nineteenth century gave way to a blacker and fiercer outlook.

There is in Marx a cold logic which is reminiscent of Calvin. Human developments are irresistible, and as independent of human will as the movements of the heavenly bodies. The force that brings about change in social affairs is the conflict of classes. After the proletarian revolution there will be only one class, and therefore change will cease: mankind will merely go on living happily ever after, as at the end of a fairy tale. For a time the dispossessed bourgeoisie will suffer, and the elect, like Tertullian, will diversify their bliss by the contemplation of the damned in concentration camps. But Marx, more merciful than Calvin, will allow their sufferings to end with death.

This curiously primitive myth appealed to the less fortunate sections of mankind, much as Christianity had appealed to slaves in the Roman Empire. It brought the hope of a great reversal, in which the oppressed would come to enjoy happiness, power, and—sweetest of all—revenge. It should, according to the word of the new gospel, have appealed first to industrial workers in the most advanced countries, namely Britain and

America. But in America wage-earners were always prosperous (unless they were immigrants or coloured people), and in Britain the prosperity of wage-earners increased very rapidly during the second half of the nineteenth century. In both countries, therefore, Marx won few adherents. He won many in Germany, but there, too, increasing prosperity led to a softening of the orthodox doctrine. It was in Russia, the most backward and the least industrialised of the Great Powers, that Marx's adherents first achieved the conquest of the government.

When Communism became Russian, it gradually underwent a very considerable transformation. When I was a young man, I knew Bebel and the elder Liebknecht, who were the leaders of the Marxist Party in Germany. Both were kindly humanitarians, psychologically very similar to other Radicals of that time. They did not hate their political opponents; they would speak of the Kaiser with good-natured derision. They felt convinced that the future was with them, but so did all the other reformers —the vegetarians, the teetotallers, the pacifists, the Armenians, the Macedonian patriots, and all the rest. This belief, at that time, was part of nineteenth-century optimism, and had not the character of a desperate revenge-phantasy. The German Marxists of that time, of whom I knew many, were for the most part likeable as individuals; one did not sense in them the vein of cruelty which has since become characteristic of Communists.

Modern Communism has been moulded by two men, Lenin and Stalin. Lenin had lived long years in the West, and so had most of his colleagues. He wanted not only to introduce Communism in Russia, but also to westernise the country. In this respect he stood much nearer to Marx than Stalin does.

Russia, however, was very different from Western countries, and what emerged was not quite what Marx had had in mind. Russia was largely illiterate; the immense majority of the population were peasants; the Tsarist autocracy had accustomed people to autocratic government; the Church was more subservient to the State than in Western countries; superstition was as widespread as it had been in Western Europe in the Middle Ages. These things facilitated what was called the dictatorship of the proletariat, which was in fact the dictatorship of the inner ring of the Communist Party. Lenin had always been ruthless, and the experience of the civil war did not make him less so. The dangers of the situation hastened the return to autocracy and the police state, to which the country had been accustomed before the Revolution.

With the coming of Stalin, the Soviet régime entered upon a new phase. Lenin was a cosmopolitan, who had lived in Western countries and had no

special feeling for Russia. Stalin knew only Russia, and had no respect for the West. He liquidated the Old Bolsheviks, and invoked traditional Russian patriotism to help out the Communist ideology. Just as, in Elizabethan England, patriotism went hand in hand with Protestantism, so in Stalin's Russia patriotism goes hand in hand with Communism. Since most Russians are intensely patriotic, this gives great added strength to the régime. It must be acknowledged that Russia under Stalin has had amazing success. Communism is now in control in China, the Balkans, Poland, and a large part of Germany, and there is every reason to expect further accessions of territory in Asia.

No success since the rise of Islam has been so rapid or so astonishing as the success of Communism. It is no wonder if the rest of the world is asking itself whether any limits short of the whole planet can be put to Soviet conquests.

Ten years ago another fanatical ideology, Fascism, seemed almost as threatening as Communism does now. Fascism has now gone underground, but perhaps only temporarily. At any rate the fanatical disposition which produced it is ready to be called out by the same kind of circumstances. The Nazis got their hold on Germany owing to the misery produced by the great depression, which, itself, was caused by the fanatical folly of American reactionaries. If America were again to pursue as mad an economic policy as that of the twenties, it is by no means impossible that correlative follies would again be generated in other countries.

Fanaticism in control of a government is dangerous because it finds co-operation with others scarcely possible. Nazis and Communists alike have made treaties and agreements seem useless to the outside world, because their fanaticism makes them incapable of good faith. As things stand, a world government is not possible unless Communism is overthrown or conquers the whole world. We must hope that its fanaticism will lessen, and that the hostile fanaticism of the United States will not meanwhile develop into an equal obstacle to co-operation.

To cure fanaticism, except as a rare aberration of eccentric individuals, three things are needed: security, prosperity, and a liberal education.

Lack of security exists throughout the world at the present time. We have all been told horrors about hydrogen bombs and bacteriological war; we all know that war may break out at any moment. The atmosphere of terror is driving men into superstition, and into forms of intolerance which intensify the danger instead of diminishing it. If fanaticism is to grow less, whether in Russia or elsewhere, the first step must be to find some way of diminishing insecurity. This is difficult in the present state of world politics, but it must be done if disaster is to be averted.

Prosperity is generally admitted, in the West, to be the best preventive of Communist fanaticism, but no one seems to draw the conclusion that it would be a good thing if Russia were prosperous. Trade across the Iron Curtain ought to be encouraged. Everything possible should be done to turn the attention of Russians to the internal development of their own country. I admit that the Russians make these things difficult, but it is bound to take time and patience to dispel their suspicions.

Liberal education is the most difficult to secure of our three requisites. Russians will have none of it; the United States has less of it year by year. Consider the case of Dr. Lattimore, who was accused of being a traitor for saying things about China which every well-informed person knew to be true, and which it was to America's interest to have known by those who make American policy. In this respect matters will not improve until there is more sense of security, at least for a few years ahead. To create such a sense, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, is the main duty of statesmen in our time.

But how is this to be done? There must be a change of emphasis: we must devote ourselves to showing, not how to secure victory for our side, nor how desirable our victory would be, but how disastrous to everybody on all sides a war must be. In the West, where free discussion is possible, important men, especially scientists, of all shades of political opinion, should meet together. It should be agreed that never, in their discussions, must anyone raise the question as to which system is best, the Russian or the American. What should be made clear is: first, that if there is a war, then even if one side is completely victorious (which is unlikely), the victors will still be worse off than if there had been no war; second, that there is no reason, except by mutual suspicion, why two kinds of régime should not exist peaceably side by side; third, that it is possible to divide the world into spheres, leaving each side free in its own sphere, but agreeing not to interfere in the other. If in the West men of sufficient importance and sufficient political diversity, including Communists, had agreed on such a solution, it is not irrational to hope that governments, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, would examine the proposals carefully, and would perhaps reach a basis of agreement. The alternative is disaster, not to this or that group, but to mankind.

If once the fear of imminent war were removed, I do not doubt that there would be a very rapid improvement. Russia would grow less illiberal, and the growth of intolerance in the United States would be checked.

If peace is to be rendered secure, world government must be our goal. Many difficulties stand in the way, and I do not think these difficulties can be overcome in less than fifty years. Meanwhile, the peace of the world must be preserved somehow, by expedients and makeshifts and a general realisation of what is at stake for mankind. The world has to learn economic

common sense; different races have to treat each other as equals; and there must be tolerance as regards differences of creed. If there is no great war, natural tendencies will probably promote these things. And if, at last, it becomes possible to create a stable world government, mankind may enter upon a period of prosperity and well-being without parallel in the past history of our species.

FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF A EUROPEAN TRAMP

The townsman on his yielding bed
Thinks that the world will end when he
Sleeps on the wooden planks instead;
He also who was forced to see
The mind's own mattresses ripped up
And many a recipient head
Smashed like a saucer or a cup
Feels that by rights he should be dead;

At times, perhaps, he even finds
That metaphysics was no more
Than luxury of idle minds,
That he was just a fool before;—
Particularly in the spring
When Chaos, as of old, unbinds
Gods who are game for anything
And demi-gods of various kinds.

In winter he is not so sure
And says his prayers just in case
A word in the right place might cure
Distraction or avert disgrace;
And still it seems a little weird
That the earth's axle is secure
When all the nightmares he most feared
Prosper in sunlight and endure.

MICHAEL HAMBURGER

(*From* Flowering Cactus *published by the Hand and Flower Press*)

Dr. Francis Walshe, F.R.S., the eminent neurologist, is the author of The Textbook of Nervous Diseases. *Next month Dr. Edward Larkin will reply for the psychiatrists*

PSYCHIATRY IN THE LAW COURTS

F. M. R. WALSHE, M.D., F.R.S.

RECENT debates in Parliament on the question of whipping as a punishment for crimes of violence have brought into the open the claim of modern psychiatry to be a final arbiter as to what is humane and rational in this matter. To those who are familiar with the current trends in psychiatric thought, such a claim will come as no surprise, for it has been implicit, when not explicit, in psychiatric teachings since the appearance of Freud's writings in the early years of the century.

Nor is it only with the punishment of crime that the psychiatrist has concerned himself. He has definite views on the training and correction of children. In all these regards, his programme is ambitious and dogmatically stated, and we are bound to ask whether psychiatry has a philosophic or a scientific background adequate to it.

Now there is no element of the traditional in psychiatric doctrines on training and punishment. They admit no allegiance to the Christian ethic. Indeed, at a recent conference on mental health, one speaker, himself a psychiatrist, is reported in the medical press as having said that for a psychiatrist to admit to holding religious principles was to invite his colleagues to tell him that he had not grown up.

We are dealing, therefore, with a collection of doctrines barely half a century old, and asserted with all the confidence and dogmatism that are so often found in connection with hypotheses that arouse powerful emotional reactions in both exponents and opponents.

Thus every prudent man will view them with reserve, knowing that dogmatic finality has no place in natural knowledge, that amongst the natural sciences at least one—physics—has changed its theoretical basis and extended its insights profoundly even within our own lifetime, and feeling that when the psychiatrist assures us that he has the truth and the whole truth on education and punishment, his claim runs counter to human experience.

Further, the critic blessed with some historical sense will see in some of the more exotic aspects of modern psychiatry signs of that moral and intellectual malaise which began to infect European thought in the years before the First World War, and he will wonder whether much of this new lore has more than a symptomatic significance.

On humanist, philosophical and scientific grounds, much could be said on this subject, but the problem has become one of practical importance since the Criminal Justice Act, 1948, gave the psychiatrist official recognition as a participant in its administration. When an offender appears before a court and a psychiatrist submits that his mental condition, though not allowing of his being certified as of unsound mind under the Lunacy Act, or as defective under the Mental Deficiency Act, requires, and is susceptible to, treatment, the court may make a probation order 'requiring' the offender 'voluntarily' to submit himself to treatment in such nursing home or mental institution as the law may allow, and the psychiatrist deem expedient, for a period not exceeding one year.

The Criminal Justice Act defines the psychiatrist as 'any duly qualified medical practitioner appearing to the court to be experienced in the diagnosis of mental disorders.' The nature of the treatment must not be specified in the order, but section 6 of the Act refers to 'surgical, electrical or other treatment, with a view to the improvement of the offender's mental condition'.

This is surely dangerously vague, and tells the court little more than that psychiatry is what the psychiatrist may decide to do, and that the psychiatrist is the person who 'appears' able to do it. In the administration of the law there are courts of several orders, from the county benches of magistrates to the high court, and we may ask what are the qualification of these, or of some of them, to decide who is really experienced as a psychiatrist, and whether they can possibly know to what precisely, under the heading of treatment, they are handing the offender over.

It is to be noted that the offender is 'required' to submit himself 'voluntarily' to treatment, and this under the provisions of the Mental Treatment Act of 1930. But, clearly, he is allowed no volition, and, further, the Act in question lays it down that a 'voluntary' patient may discharge himself from treatment and from a mental hospital upon three days' written notice. Thus, under this Act he may not be legally detained against his will for the maximum period of one year provided in the Criminal Justice Act.

But the legislative chaos embodied in these conflicting provisions is not their most sinister feature. This surely is that the offender, though not mentally defective or of unsound mind, may be compelled to submit himself for any period up to a year to a psychiatrist's choice of 'surgical, electrical or other treatment'. It is true that if he objects he may make a reasoned statement of the grounds of his refusal to the court making the

probation order. To do this is not an easy task, and, in any case, how can he do it before he finds out, too late perhaps, and after he has been committed to a mental hospital, what it is that he is being required to submit to: whether to psychological analysis, narco-analysis, electrically-induced convulsions, or to the surgeon's knife for that amputation of the forward end of his brain known as prefrontal leucotomy—an operation now very extensively performed for psychological abnormalities of many kinds, and now sanctioned by clear implication in the Act?

How negligible the essential rights of the human person have become in the eyes of Parliament, and in our Welfare State, may be realised when it is recalled that the physiologist or pathologist working in a laboratory and using guinea pigs, mice or cats, has to obtain a Home Office licence which lays down with detailed precision what operations or feeding experiments he may perform, on what animals, on how many animals and how many times. He is left with no discretion as to what he shall do under his licence, and this applies as well to the simple feeding experiment as to surgical interventions. As the law now stands, the psychiatrist working under a probation order has a discretion in his treatment of the human subject denied to the physiologist who uses four-legged guinea pigs.

Apart from the ethical implications of these provisions of the Criminal Justice Act which, in banning the whip, offers the offender the substitute of the surgeon's knife or the convulsive apparatus, we must consider the hazards surrounding the offender whom the Act has handed over, body and soul, to the psychiatrist.

To appreciate these involves some notion of the theories and methods of modern psychiatry and some sketch of its history. Psychiatry developed in the last century as a descriptive study in which the diverse forms of mental disorder were classified. Factors of causation then became matters of research, and modes of empirical treatment were devised. Then followed legal provisions for the care and protection of sufferers from mental disorders.

In the early years of the present century the teachings of Freud, with their emphasis on the prime importance in determining human actions of mental processes dating from infancy and not in consciousness, came into prominence and made a revolution in psychiatric thought and practice, extending beyond the boundaries of what is ordinarily spoken of as unsoundness of mind, to include those minor psychological disorders, not involving the same degree of divorce from reality in the sufferer's mind and known to us under the familiar names of anxiety neurosis, obsessive neurosis, hysteria, and the like.

From this point there developed, broadly speaking, two categories of psychiatrist: the institutional psychiatrist, in other words, the asylum

doctor, on the one hand, and the psychiatrist who dealt with the minor mental disorders already named and included under the general term psychoneuroses. The sufferers from the latter are not of unsound mind, but with more or less stress pass more or less normal lives, or at least live in circulation within the community. This is the category, now found to be larger than was before suspected, in respect of which the teachings and the methods of Freud, and of the heretics and schismatics from the true Freudian faith, have become increasingly invoked, until, indeed, a stage has almost been reached in which the psychiatrist who deals with this group can with difficulty be persuaded to admit that any of us is normal, while he is sure that those who are critical of his doctrines are not normal.

This necessarily sketchy account omits much, but I believe that it fairly makes the broad distinctions relevant to my theme. It is therefore the psychiatrist who deals with the minor mental disorders in non-institutionalised persons, not certifiable under the Lunacy or the Mental Deficiency Acts, who most often appears in the courts as an expert witness in the circumstances envisaged in the Criminal Justice Act of 1948.

It is important to realise that there is no generally-accepted body of psychiatric doctrine or practice, but that there are, on the contrary, many conflicting and incompatible schools of both, while the psychiatric body is rent by fierce intestine feuds on matters both of theory and of practice. There is no science of psychological medicine in the sense in which the term 'science' is used by natural scientists. Psychiatry or psychological medicine is, in fact, not a branch of natural science, and if it has any scientific affiliation at all, it is with historical science.

Natural science is concerned with the observation of natural events, with the verification of its observations by repetition and experiment, with the discernment of patterns and sequences in these events and thence with the formulation of general laws, the laws of nature, which allow of prediction. Psychiatry is not primarily concerned with simple natural events, but with human actions, and it seeks to discover the mental processes, conscious and unconscious, which have determined them. These are its essential data, and not things here and now which the psychiatrist can observe, repeat, control and verify. His data lie in the past, and can be elicited only by the historical method of inquiry. By various methods of inquiry, e.g. the interpretation of dreams, or rather of as much of them as the subject remembers and decides to tell, and the method of free association or that of narco-analysis, the psychiatrist obtains his fragmentary record, which he then proceeds to interpret. This is the method of history, not that of natural science.

But even as an historian the psychiatrist's status may be defective, in so far as he interprets his record not solely in the light of his own critical judgment and experience, but according to one or other of the current symbolist systems—Freudian, Jungian, or Adlerian. When he does this, he

easily becomes prone to pseudo-mysticism, to obsessive dogmatism and to a sacerdotalism of outlook that are the worst enemies of reasoned thinking. By and large, the psychiatrist's interpretations tell us as much of himself and of his doctrinal affiliations as they do of his patient. Freud was well aware of the limitations of dream exegesis, but his modern followers have certitudes their master never claimed and which, indeed, are not given to historians.

At the other extreme of thought and practice is a growing body of psychiatric opinion which interprets mental activities in terms of the physiological functions of the brain. For them the intellect is but 'the ghost in the machine', and in effect they cut the ground from under the very possibility of any science of psychology. It is this school that turns so eagerly to surgical mutilations of the brain and other physical procedures, such as convulsive therapy. Thus, we see psychiatry swinging perpetually between allegory and machinery in its theory and practice, from the attempted exegesis of dreams to what in a barbarous neologism is called 'psycho-surgery'. Still more amazing, we find psychiatrists who see no antimony in entertaining fragments of both orders of theory in their minds, and in using every possible mode of treatment, psychological and physical.

It is into this fermenting vat that the court plunges the offender when it makes a probation order ordering him 'voluntarily' to submit to psychiatric treatment. It is to this source that the courts must turn in their search for help in the administration of the criminal law.

Therefore it is not surprising that many doctors and laymen view with grave concern the intrusion of the psychiatrist in the administration of the criminal law, and begin to suspect that such overworked terms as 'sadism', 'inferiority complex', 'overcompensation', and the like, are no longer to be taken as elements in a scientific grammar, but have become verbal detonators, vituperative and intimidating slogans used to advance psychiatric doctrines, and to stall criticism by prejudicing the critic's case.

All this is not to maintain that upon occasion the critically-minded psychiatrist is not able to give valuable guidance to the courts, as, for example, in the case of offences committed by persons in states of post-epileptic automatism, by obsessives, and by persons of unsound mind who have never come under medical observation prior to their appearance before the courts.

The danger of psychiatry lies in the imperfect and incoherent state of its teachings, in the extravagant claims sometimes made for its usefulness and for its right to be a court of appeal from all the ethical sanctions that govern behaviour in a Christian country, and in the proneness of some psychiatrists to feel it their responsibility to provide psychological alibis for any criminal or delinquent whatsoever by wrapping his acts in the lush

and obscure terminology of psychiatry: a process so simple for one who knows the jargon that the appearances of mental abnormality can be imparted to almost any human act and to any personality.

On the other hand, an offender may under the forms of law be handed over to some drastic form of treatment capable of permanently changing his personality, for the better it is fondly hoped, though we can have no guarantee that this will be so. I do not know whether the operation of leucotomy has yet been performed on an offender under a probation order, but the law allows it and the court may award it.

That such a control over the body and personality of an offender should be conferred by an Act of Parliament, without protest in its passage through the two Houses, indicates how shaky our ethical principles have become, and how the minds of politicians, writers and other makers of public opinion have been influenced by the unceasing propaganda and the ambitious claims of many psychiatrists. The day has not yet come when we can unquestionably accept their guidance through the labyrinths of human conduct. There are older and higher sanctions than they take into account.

Eric Newton

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DE CHIRICO: *Piazza d'Italia* (1915)

NOTES ON THE EXHIBITION OF MODERN ITALIAN ART

[*This exhibition is organised by the Arts Council under the auspices of the Amici di Brera and the Italian Institute. It leaves the Tate Gallery at the beginning of August and will be at the Leicester Art Gallery from 5–26 August and the Manchester Art Gallery from 4–24 September.*]

TO begin with, this is not a complete collection, nor was it meant to be. It is a little well-chosen exhibition to illustrate the new artistic movements from roughly 1910 to 1930, with a little extra thrown in because the organisers could not bear to leave it out. It begins with Futurism and takes us through the Metaphysical period to the New Classicism of today.

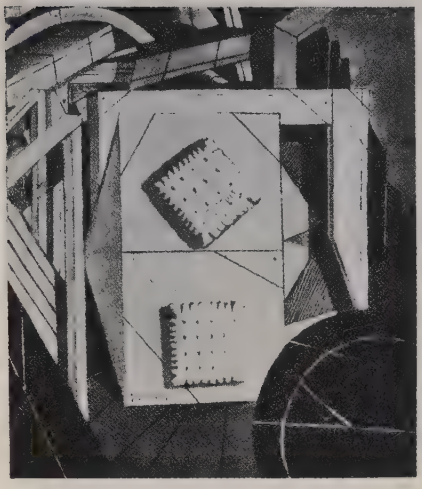
Secondly, do not let us take this exhibition too seriously, not quite as seriously at least as some critics have done. It would be too much if here, at home, in our own cities, we still had to appear as anxiously craning

tourists while the Italians sat gently spitting and wondering at us in the shade. I do not think the artists themselves intended this seriousness. Why, otherwise, did de Chirico put this absurd wood-burning engine in the Piazza d'Italia, or why does Campigli, after painting so many severe decorations in the Etruscan manner, produce, in 1950, his 'Roundabout', where the same Etruscan ladies, in kid boots and parasols, are queueing up at the fair, and the roundabout itself is Etruscan, being made of red clay pottery?

Begin with the Futurists. Perhaps no one would have been more disgusted than they at the idea of possessing a period charm; and yet, after forty years, so it is. Your critic does not remember 1912, but is as susceptible to it as anyone. For, through the dissolving cogwheels, the blasts and explosions and 'plastic dynamism', there are disturbing glimpses. In 'Speed of a Car, Plus Light, Plus Sound' the huge round headlights recall motoring stories in the old *Strand*. In Severini's 'Portrait of Signora S' are fragments of pearl coat-buttons, a hat with ostrich feathers and a daring cigarette.

SEVERINI:
Portrait of Signora S. (1912)

DE CHIRICO:
La Mort d'un Esprit (1915)



Realism creeps in by strange doorways. In every artist the instinct to do something 'just like' lingers savagely repressed. The Surrealists, when they borrowed De Chirico's motifs, hit on the happy idea that realism would be respectable if it was transferred to the world of dreams. These biscuits (si horriblement ressemblent) *are said to symbolise the world of luxury*

There are limp pierrot dolls, straw boaters and high collars and a scrap of newspaper—*M. Caillaux veut se battre en duel.* You get a whiff of feverish optimism and gaiety, the breath of those dashing Manifestos. (The one on music, in 1930, was called 'Futurist Manifesto on the Art of Noise'.)

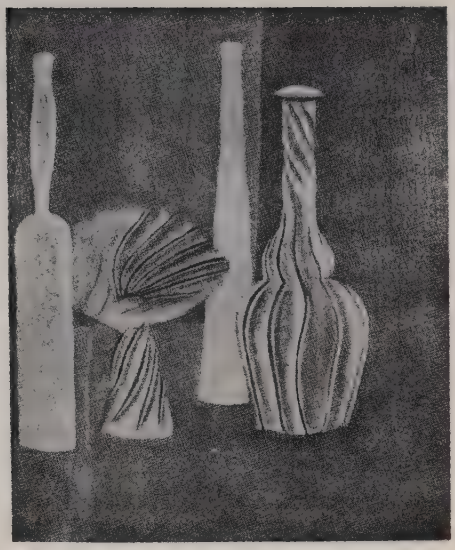
I do not know that the Futurists were a very important movement—Wilenski used to complain that they were only Popular Romantics (in his definition) whizzing round and round. They were soon eclipsed by the Cubists, but their memory lingers on with the pavement artist. He is faithful to the academic still life of fish and fruit, and to the Futuristic explosion with bits and pieces. In this year's Open Air Exhibition at Hampstead, I saw 'Death of a Modern Madonna by an Atom Bomb' which was a distant echo of Balla and Boccioni.

DE CHIRICO:
The Disquieting Muses (1917)

MODIGLIANI:
Portrait of Paul Guillaume (1916)

MARIO SIRONI:
The Cyclist (1916)

MORANDI:
Still Life with Bottle (1916)



The reproduction can give no idea of the pink and white tones and delicate sea-shell colours of the original. Morandi is one of the great ascetics of painting

Cubism, which should come next historically, was not, of course, an Italian movement, and it is represented here, if at all, by Modigliani. Modigliani painted and suffered in Paris, and yet he remained an Italian, *italianissimo* just as El Greco in Madrid remained Greek. He adopted Cézanne's discoveries in how to paint recession (the planes of a nose and cheek for instance) by varying the colour, and he might, perhaps, have truly become a Cubist, if to the cone, the cylinder and the sphere had been added a piece of s-bend tubing. But Modigliani was not a painter of weight and mass, but a master of outline. He was a lover of the swan neck which has bewitched so many Italians, the neck of Raphael's Swiss Guards and da Vinci's Madonnas, and the flowing line that runs so surely round those long limbs and heavy eyelids and loose collars and ties is Sienese, almost Chinese in its beauty. The sad elegance of his portraits dominates this exhibition—I do not say puts the rest of it in the shade, but it is as if the shadow had made the light look somewhat vulgar.

The Futurists began to break up in about 1915, and were succeeded (or turned into) the Metaphysicals (Carrà, Morandi, de Chirico). The Metaphysicals were, in their turn, ready with manifestos, and their 'magic realism' was to be 'a poetic transfiguration of simple things'. These simple things were, in the main, dressmakers' dummies, lay figures, wine bottles, set squares, easels, and, in the case of de Chirico, the rich symbolism of Petit Beurre biscuits. It is not difficult to see what surrealism owed to these modest beginnings. It was, at any rate, after 1911 that de Chirico painted his series of fantastic pictures, with statues and railway stations that never were on sea or land, dark green skies, and menacing shadows not only of the buildings but of things unseen falling across the warm glazed light. The sinister disquiet of these empty squares, in which we should not much like to set foot (for we should never reach those tiny figures in the distance) is, in fact, magical. It is the magic of 'mechanical' perspective, which had been rejected as vulgar by the pure Cubists, which, partly perhaps out of sheer contrariness, de Chirico brought back with the fascination of Uccello. It is his misfortune, I think, that his art so easily became fashionable. 'All driven out and condemned to be chic.' We owe it to him to forget that his style is the darling of *Vogue* and of corset advertisements.

MASSIMO CAMPIGLI: *The College (1929/30)*

Campigli is a craftsman, a designer of mosaic and a great lithographer. The Cretan and Etruscan motifs in his art are clear enough in this picture, but notice the drawing of the schoolmistress's hand firmly grasping the little girl's; this is something more than a pattern

It strikes me that the Italians (as compared with the Germans, for instance) have cheated a little in the austere atmosphere of modern movements by the sheer charm of their colour. The deep bottle green, modulating to sea-green, in de Chirico's skies is echoed in Carrà's 'Seascape at Moneglia' and winks back out of the two eyes, one blue, one bottle green, of Modigliani's 'Paul Guillaume'. Or those most characteristic colours of Italy, charcoal black, the practical dark colour of working clothes and a subtle greyish white; you see the black in the sepulchral horse and cab of Carrà's 'Roundabout', and much later in his romantic 'Expectation' where a peasant woman and a little black dog with a grey stomach stand watching in the half light. This black and grey whizzes by again in Sironi's 'Cyclist' and his 'Gasometer'. Or there is the earth-red of Campigli's Pompeian and Etruscan decorations which appears so often in Modigliani's flesh-tones and gives those faces their haunting archaic air.

And words certainly cannot do justice to the colours used by Giorgio Morandi. His 'simple things' are bottles, shells, vases of flowers and occasionally a quiet landscape; he has limited himself to these, and his magic comes from the pinks, greys, greens and chalk whites so subtle that the 'Yellow Bottle', made of pale citron glass, seems almost dangerous. He is an ascetic, an artist's artist, who has carried his method so far that he can (like Renoir) suggest roundness not only without shadow, but with scarcely a variation of the colour.

In the little section of sculpture, everyone has been struck by the work of Giacomo Manzu. Manzu was born in 1908, and has been quite untouched by plastic dynamism, and by extensions of a footballer in space. His masters, it is said, are Donatello and the late nineteenth-century sculptor Medardo Rosso. Rosso, who lived, like Manzu, at Milan, was one of the first impressionists of sculpture. His theory, at least in 1883, was that 'Art must be nothing else than the sudden sensation given to us by light. There exists only but light. I have attempted to reproduce, in an Impression de Boulevard, a femine physiognomy, seen in the fugitive space of the fraction of a second, but caught just as I saw it. That is my conception of art—which can also be defined in the words of the poet: "A moment's monument".' Full of these ideas, he called on Rodin in Paris and is supposed to have converted him to Impressionism. But fortunately an artist can say what he likes: it is his business to create, and the critic must explain away his remarks afterwards. Rosso's work has great poetic charm and is the unexpected 'hit' of this summer's *Biennale* exhibition at Venice.[1]

[1] *There will be an article on Rosso in a future number.—Ed.*

If Manzu studied light and shade with the Impressionists (notice the play of shadow on the backbone of the kneeling St. John in the 'Crucifixion' of 1938), then it was from Donatello that he studied weight. I have included here a reproduction of his young ballet dancer sitting in a chair and resting, and you can see how her puppy-like weight and tiredness pin the chair down to the earth, a truly monumental repose. I wish, though, that I could have got a photograph of his 'Cardinal', a recent work which is on loan from the Tate Gallery. In this little figure Manzu has sacrificed deliberately all the grace of arms and legs, for the Cardinal, by virtue of his office, has none. He tapers from his substantial base under the bronze folds of his robe up to the point of his mitre; and the mitre, which in the rococo saints and bishops became the flame of a candle, is here the top of a pyramid, not a moment's monument certainly, but a grave and solid expression of the church that was built on a rock and has endured two thousand years.

GIACOMO MANZU:
Child on a Chair (Bronze, 1940)

I am sorry that the reproduction (like a holiday snapshot) alters the proportions of this beautiful statue

THE NEW ITALIAN WRITERS

BERNARD WALL

IT is not easy to write about the present state of Italian literature, because even the main landmarks and the names of the foremost novelists and poets are little known in England. The fault for this regrettable state of affairs is not entirely British. Fascism helped to conceal the abilities of Italians from the outside world and encouraged us to think of Italy's glories as exclusively of the past. However that may be, modern Italian literature is something of a *terra incognita* for Englishmen, and one not easy to explore in a few hours.

The social and historical formation of Italy—there is no single capital, for Rome, Milan, Florence, Naples, Trieste, and Palermo are all more or less rivals even today—make comparison with centralised countries difficult. Those cities, and a number of others, have more literary and artistic life than 'provincial' towns in other countries. But the fact that each has a unique atmosphere and tradition has prevented the formation of a unitary and single idiom or style. It may also have something to do with that Philistinism amongst the middle classes about which so many Italian writers complain—the preference for Anglo-Saxon or French novels, and the neglect of Italian writers (and, for that matter, of Italian films).

And then, of course, Italy is a country of extreme contrasts: not only between rich and poor, or North and South, but also between an intense traditionalism and conservativism on the one side, and a taste for the ultra-modern and the *avant-garde* on the other. Side by side with the twelfth-century Romanesque churches and Renaissance palaces that have never been altered for five hundred years, there are towering edifices of concrete and glass which, over here, we associate with architects such as Le Corbusier.

Hence there are a whole lot of special tensions in Italian life. People have an intense *pietas* for the soil of their birth, yet they are themselves wanderers. The novelist Elio Vittorini in *Le Donne di Messina* ('The Women of Messina'), to my mind the profoundest of his post-war books, has turned his eye on to this restless movement from city to city in overcrowded trains, and the perpetual prospect of emigration further afield, to France or America: to the emigrant who, wherever he is, never forgets his native village and longs to return to it. Or, to take another example from a different field, there is the tension regarding language. Italian is not a centralised language. The different regions have their own dialects and they still cling to them in spite of the cosmopolitanism of the radio and the newspapers. Some of the dialects—

Milanese, Neapolitan or Roman—have a poetic literature. They have a directness and terseness that Italian lacks, and they are the only real vehicle for his mouth. What we call 'Italian' is a compromise language based on Tuscan, and even today arguments and disagreements about it have not ceased. A writer's language can be more or less 'literary' or more or less the local 'spoken' language. In England or in France nowadays we take Stendhal's advice and we like to write more or less as we talk. And so we cannot appreciate much emphasis on 'style'. Many contemporary Italian writers are of the same view, but others are not. Hence come those well-known disagreements about the merits of particular Italian writers. Let me give an example. The Triestino, Italo Svevo, the greatest novelist since Giovanni Verga (both Verga and Svevo are excellently translated), wrote neither in Tuscan nor in the kind of Venetian dialect spoken in the towns of Istria, but in the language used by business men in cosmopolitan Trieste. Italian critics find Svevo's language hard to accept. They have called it 'anti-literary' and even 'pidgin-Italian', and, judged by the standards of great stylists such as Emilio Cecchi or Riccardo Bachelli (one from Florence, the other from Bologna), it certainly is. Yet in one of Svevo's novels someone objects to a girl who pretentiously tries to talk Tuscan, which is not her language. The same complaint is made against Ignazio Silone as against Svevo by Italian critics.

But the field of modern Italian literature, with its innumerable reviews that are born and die, its schools and quarrels between conservatives and revolutionaries, the intense and cerebral character of literary discussions and the swarming of abstract ideas is obviously too much for an article, so I want to concentrate here mainly on the younger generation.

Here again we cannot separate literature from life as a whole, and we need to recall the main facts about Fascism and the war. The Fascist dictatorship established a censorship over literature, but we have only to look at the books that escaped its net to realise that the censorship was comparatively mild. Indeed, it was more like the inefficient censorship of the Neapolitan Bourbons or the Austrians than like that of modern Germany or Russia. Officials helped to sabotage the laws and the old humanity, kindness and corruption helped to save Italians in this as in earlier centuries. Officially the Fascists encouraged the rhetorical literature of Gabriele D'Annunzio, from whom Mussolini borrowed so much of his style, but beneath the surface Italy was undergoing the same experience as other countries. Poetry and creative writing were really reacting away from the big-mouthed Fascist style. In poetry, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Eugenio Montale and a number of others made exactly the same discoveries as Apollinaire, Valéry and Eluard in France, or Eliot and Pound amongst Anglo-Saxons. Both Ungaretti and Montale are intellectual, slight, terse and 'difficult'. The younger novelists were influenced by the

writers then most read abroad and Giovanni Verga, the Sicilian realist, influenced them too. But, as they published their earliest works under the Fascist censorship, their experience was intimately bound up with the special conditions of dictatorship. The experience went deep, and they still write about the problems it raised. There is no parallel in English writing, but the French had an experience that was psychologically rather similar during the German occupation.

Italians have been taught, by centuries of history, the important art of living tolerably well in difficult times, and they are masters of sabotage. During the dictatorship, the opposition of the younger writers was of an indirect kind. Whatever their nominal allegiance, they spread doubts about the 'values' that the Fascists upheld. Disseminating doubt and disintegrating systems from within is a millenary activity in Italy. Only after the overthrow of Mussolini were they able to fully express the feelings they had been sorting out for years, and thus the long Lent helped to prepare the great literary carnival which began in 1945. Novels, poems, essays, and films were produced, which interpreted, often brilliantly, the sombre mood of modern Europe.

II

When we read the novelists of the younger generation, we are struck by a certain continuity of main themes. The subjects that interest the writers are predominantly social. Writers are concerned about the contrast between a given man's actions and his beliefs, or about the conflict of loyalties that was so poignant in a country where many people wished for defeat in war so as to achieve the overthrow of Fascism. At one time or another nearly every writer had been up against the question of whether it was legitimate to join the Party so as to avoid poverty or indirect persecution. After the war the same issue came up again, this time *à rebours*. Former Fascists flocked to the victorious camp, protesting that they had always been democrats, and men wanted by the law tried to join the new parties.

In other words, the dictatorship and the events that followed caused a kind of political schizophrenia, and this very modern subject comes up again and again in Italian novels. Thus Corrado Alvaro, a Southern writer who is best known over here for his powerful and sinister study of totalitarian conditions, *Man is Strong*, writes of a young soldier who returned on leave from his little enclosed world on a distant front in the war, only to find that his parents are really hoping the enemy will win and are listening to the enemy radio. For the young soldier, ignorance is bliss, and he only becomes happy again when he returns to his sequestered world in which there is no obligation to think. Elio Vittorini, a Sicilian now in his forties, has tackled a similar social theme time and time again in his novels.

Underneath Vittorini's surface control there throbs a passionate poetry of the life of the common man. In *Conversation in Sicily*, the Fascist background —the world of the two sinister men Moustache and No Moustache in the train—is omnipresent amongst the poor villagers who are short of quinine, the Sicilians who work in the orange groves or in the sulphur mines or on the railways. And the plot of his latest work—a long novel whose workmanship is a fascinating mixture of the Greco-Latin style and *Moby Dick*—is about the resettlement of a bombed village after the war, and the attempt of a Nazi killer to return to normal humane life, his near success and his final failure. The same theme, that of a depraved Fascist youth's life after the end of the war, occurs in *Un Eroe del Nostro Tempo* ('A Hero of Our Time') by the novelist of the Florentine *bas-fonds*, Vasco Pratolini. Vitaliano Brancati has written a play that turns on the local politics of a village—the Church, the Resistance, the Fascists—at the time of the fall of the régime. And Cesare Pavese, an outstanding novelist from Piedmont, has written terse stories about life in Turin when the allies were bombing the city, and about political banishment *in confino* (a Fascist punishment also described by Carlo Levi in *Christ Stopped at Eboli*).

I have only illustrated a general movement with a few examples. Of course I do not wish to give an impression that recent Italian novels deal only with political events, or are exclusively of a sombre colour. The life of Italian refugees who fled from German occupation to the hills of the South (numbers of Italian writers were amongst them, including Moravia and Alvaro) inspired one of the best ironical and pathetic stories I have read in recent years, *La Giacca Verde* ('The Green Coat'), by Mario Soldati. It is about a well-known conductor who found himself forced to live *tête-à-tête* in a monastery with a drummer in an orchestra who had persuaded the monks and the villagers that he was a great musician. In his embarrassment the conductor did all he could to hide his own identity and keep up the imposture of his colleague. But this only leads to a new embarrassment when life returns to normal and the conductor is asked to conduct an orchestra in which he recognises the drummer.

But the light or ironic approach is the exception, not the general rule. It is only adopted by writers who for some special reasons are outside the general trend—Alberto Savinio, for instance, the brilliant literary brother of Giorgio di Chirico, who could hardly be called typically Italian for he was born in Athens and quotes Greek, Latin, French, and German literatures with equal fluency. Alberto Moravia has written amusing surrealist stories as well as his novels, but they are not typical work; they are, as it were, cast off casually by a mind of quite exceptional and restless power.

It seems to me that Moravia is now at the centre of the literary movement in Italy, and as he is also one of the few Italians who are well known abroad, I can perhaps use him as an illustration of a mood. The central theme of

Moravia's novels is that of sexual relationships. The plots are simple and unadorned. Moravia believes in telling a simple tale as simply as possible. But sex brings in the whole world of political and social disintegration. The characters of his recent novels—*Agostino*, *La Romana* ('The Roman Girl') or *L'Amore Coniugale* ('Married Love') live in a climate of metaphysical and social disintegration, but even *Gli Indifferenti* ('Indifferent People'), written twenty years ago, was a picture-gallery of the same kind of corruption. Moravia rips off all façades. The prostitute in *La Romana* is preferable to the weak or hideous men with whom she has to deal, partly because she is so simple, she tells no lies, she comforts herself with no hypocrisies because she is automatically excluded from the conventional world in which these vices reign. Nearly everybody is disagreeable or absurd in Moravia's world, and this is not only an expression of a particular society—middle-class Italy under Fascism—but also of *la condition humaine*. The approach is at one and the same time sceptical and vitalist. Common sense, a sense of measure, even, I could perhaps add, the absence of a real *romantic* tradition in Italy, prevent these characters from being suicidal.

To show what I mean, let me mention two younger novelists out of at least half a dozen other outstanding ones. The nearest to Moravia, I think, is Pier-Antonio Quarantotti Gambini who comes from Istria and lives and works in Venice. This young writer's most recent novel, which appeared about a year ago, is called *L'Onda del Incrociatore* ('The Backwash of the Cruiser'). Its characters live in the old port at Trieste. It is a story of twisted adolescent minds, of prostitution and decay, and the author tells it destructively and bitterly.

Or there is Vasco Pratolini, whom I have already mentioned. All his novels, *Cronache di Poveri Amanti* ('A Tale of Poor Lovers'), *Il Quartiere* ('Our District'), and *Un Eroe del Nostro Tempo*, have the same setting—that of the disinherited, the down-and-outs of the back streets of Florence. Pratolini, like Vittorini, is of working-class origin, and for years he lived among the barrow-men, prostitutes, and petty thieves (as well as police spies) whom he now describes. His characters live lives of frustration by which they are demoralised. Only a few have the patience and determination to hold out—the anti-Fascists; and they go off to prison.

This negative and bitter tone is, of course, not confined to Italian novelists. It is also to be found in the United States, in those novels in which the twentieth-century *Steppenwolf* carries his despair and metaphysical loneliness through the canyons of the skyscrapers. And it exists in France. At least as a novelist, Jean-Paul Sartre has a tone not dissimilar, and so has Raymond Queneau. As in other countries, so in Italy recent novels imply a revolutionary attitude to society, though this, too, is negative beyond a certain point. Pessimism has deep roots in Italian literature, though Italy itself is the most cheerful of countries. In these recent novelists

I find not so much a 'Communist' attitude—Communism being the antithesis of scepticism—as a continuation of the grim and even fatalistic spirit with which Giovanni Verga analysed the life of the Sicilians at the end of the last century, adding material detail to material detail until the *dénouement* of destruction was reached.

III

It would be tempting to compare literature in Italy today with the condition in which D'Annunzio left it, and then bring out the complete reversal of values that has taken place. But that would be an over-simplification, for D'Annunzio was a many-sided figure and wrote at one time like Verga and at another he tried to imitate the Russians. The real reaction is against the common Fascist outlook in all fields—political and moral as well as literary. The sentence is stripped of its unnecessary trappings, just as the façade is stripped off convention, off 'respectability' and off the activities of the impostor in all their forms. It is an expression of the modern mood of frustration, but also a continuation of the endemic reaction in Italy towards realism, directness and sincerity. In this way it links up with the polemical literature of the remote past and the long tradition of writings about imprisonment, exile, and wandering that is specially Italian.

HERO

It is not strange that with each change of weather
Power drenched him through like sudden shower of rain
So that he knew no equal, sensed no pain,
But like a roaring bull slipped from his tether,
First trod his father down then took his mother,
Answering a riddle older than man's world;
It is not strange, I say, for as a child
Upon a hill they'd nailed his feet together.

HENRY TREECE

REMINISCENCES OF SIR JOHN SQUIRE

I.—CAMBRIDGE, 1903

I SHALL try, in this volume, as a member of what used to be called the 'missing generation'—for there is another one now—to say what I can remember of the years between 1903, when I went to Cambridge, and August 1914, when Hell broke loose. Among all the friends I must mention, many never lived to justify themselves; they could only die to justify themselves.

Two things may divert me from my proposed path. One is that I have always disliked the free use of the pronoun 'I' in print, especially if used by myself; and have frequently been tempted to evade it by the use of the cowardly 'one'. But autobiography is autobiography, and if the pages of this book look like an endless series of park railings, it cannot be helped.

The other is that I may well have been privy to what the world may think important events or exciting people. That I cannot help; we are not all made in the same mould; and for myself, I am apt to remember a spray of cherry blossom against a blue sky and forget what Mr. X said about Japan.

These lines are written before I have begun the book; whatever happens later, the reader has been warned, and I shall see no reason for altering them.

However, the older I get, the less difficult I find retrospect to be, and I am setting out on a voyage through the past as seen through one man's eyes, from his own corner. I have not yet reached the stage where there is nothing more to be done but to bask in the evening sunshine, like one of Shakespeare's granfers, and dream of days gone over, which would imply a weariness and indifference which I hope I shall never know. Yet the past, though it may be enervating to dwell too much on it, has a melancholy sweetness; and that revisit to the place where I had enjoyed part of my boyhood has led me at intervals to let down the nets into the sea behind me and draw up whatever came with them. For not only the end of youth came back to me with an overwhelming poignancy, but the end of a world and the end of a sodality. To people who were fifty when the Kaiser's war broke out, it came as an interruption, however long, terrible and fraught with change. To us, who were thirty or less, it came as an end. We had no careers or long associations behind us, only beginnings, first sortings and plans, discoveries of friendships. The war broke on us, destroying,

invalidating; our youth went prematurely; we were scarred before our time by the griefs of age; we had to face a new world, when we were just beginning to be acclimatised to an old one. And for half of us, the parting from youth was more bitter and final; for to those bones there is no return, even in imagination, to lost things, no remembering, with every pang and outline, sundrenched in the gold-dusty air of illusion, the joys and sorrows that were, and the faces, serious or laughing, of those who strayed through the courts that strangers now inhabit and by streams that still so brightly and indifferently flow.

I cannot, though my mother had a cook, and I had a Nanny, and some of my schoolmasters, as they grew older, became just as eccentric as other people's schoolmasters, allow myself the assumption that my experiences in the nursery, at school or in the holidays, could be as uniquely interesting to the population at large as some people think theirs. So let us assume that I was born, suckled, weaned, clothed, introduced to various refined and rougher sports and pastimes, and educated, so far as I would let them educate me, and plunge at once into a wider world than that of school.

* * *

In October 1903, I went up to Cambridge.

I do not remember my first afternoon, which was doubtless spent in interviewing dons, servants and tradesmen; but I have an acute and doleful image of my first evening.

It is possible for undergraduates to come into College until midnight, but not, unless they are members of other colleges, to go out after ten. After I had finished my first scrappy meal, tucked away an aged violin-case, put a few books in order, and stacked my clothes, I remembered this, and also that I did not know one single soul in the College, all my friends having gone to other colleges or to Oxford. Somebody had told me that there were 120 Etonians in Trinity and eighty Marlburians in Pembroke; they could keep each other warm, doubtless, but what help was that to me? There was no comfort in my surroundings. The oil lamp smoked dimly (there were no electric lights then); it was cold, and the few sticks of furniture left me as fixtures were crazy and hideous, the chief article being an ancient and flattened basket-chair which creaked like a greaseless axle every time one moved, other arm-chairs as yet there being none.

I gloomily put a kettle on, and set the teapot to warm before the feeble fire, made out of a few sticks and coals which the bedmaker had borrowed from a Chinaman in the next room who had not yet returned. I went to the bedroom, undressed, put on pyjamas, a dressing-gown and a pair of carpet-slippers (I had induced an aunt to work me some, pea-green with pink roses) and came back to huddle over the ugly little grate and try to warm myself with tea.

Outside the rain spattered the window and the wind wept through the treetops. I stared at the fire. But I was not seeing fairy-pictures there; I was merely chilled to the soul. 'Why,' I reflected angrily, 'must I be doomed to these horrible little rooms, so far from anywhere? It wouldn't have been so bad if my tutor had any of those sets by the Bridge of Sighs, where even tonight I could have looked at the reflections in the river; I asked, as a *pis-aller*, for a high view over the Backs; but *why* didn't I realise that this was a quarter of a mile from the front gate, quite apart from the grim workhouse staircase with its hundred stone steps and its foul iron railing, and quite apart from the fact that to get here I have to walk through that great wedding-cake of a New Court when there are all those other pretty courts in the College?'

Then I began reproaching myself. 'Why, above all when I was here in June, was I such a damned fool as to choose this howling green wallpaper just because the last one was so drab? I must admit that I didn't realise what it would look like in gross. But now I shall have to live with the pest all the time I am here; there is nothing to be done except cover it all up with cheap prints touching each other; even paper fans would be better than nothing. Oh, damn, there's only dust left in my pouch.'

The fire failed; the tea grew weak as water; the lamp leapt and had to be trimmed. My soul yearned to Leopardi, Werther and the Prisoners in the Bastille.

Gustily through the darkness came the chimes of midnight. It would be still colder in the bedroom; I hadn't even a hot-water-bottle. I lifted the lamp, scattering the shadows, and prepared to go. 'I don't believe I shall ever speak to a single soul here,' I muttered.

There was a gentle knock at the door. I started and said 'Come in!' Who on earth could it be?

There entered not one man but three men, and they looked very senior and grave.

* * *

Experienced though their eyes may have been, the spectacle must have seemed a strange one. It is difficult, of course, to imagine oneself; but I was at the time lean, though not quite cadaverous, and had a great tousle of dark hair; and what with the dying sparks, the broken old chair, and the dressing-gown—everything, in fact, except a guttering candle stuck in a beer-bottle—I must have looked very much like some Dickensian Skimpole or Dick Swiveller caught at a time of depression in a squalid attic, by 'H.B.' or 'Phiz'. This doesn't sound in the least like Mrs. Cornford's description of Rupert Brooke, when he came up from Rugby with his XI and his XV, as 'A young Apollo, golden-haired'. However, the truth should be told.

'We thought we'd call on you', they said, murmuring in unison.

'How extremely kind of you', I replied, bewildered, feeling that I could have faced these mysteries one by one but was completely nonplussed by them all together.

'I am called Benians,'[1] said the first one, a tall, slightly-stooping, very good-looking, red-haired man with sad and sympathetic eyes. 'My name is MacDonnell,'[2] said a shorter man with fair hair, piercing eyes and a jaw. 'And my name is Joce,' said the third, a tall, dark, vivacious man, who didn't seem quite so senior, but quite senior enough; 'you're from Devonshire, aren't you?'

It flashed across me that that day I had gone to the Master's Lodge, put my hands, kneeling, between his hands, and, surrounded by paintings of bewigged worthies, sworn to goodness-knows-what as a Foundation Scholar, and signed my name in an antique book, possibly bound in thick leather-covered timbers, Johannes Squire, Devoniensis—for the county of origin had to be registered.

That was a clue, of sorts; but no further clue, to this day, has been forthcoming as to why these men, who really need not yet have been up, called on me, an obscure fresher, at that late hour of night.

* * *

I entertained them extremely badly. I naturally stood for a time. I could hardly offer any of them the wicker chair whose base and flaccid cushions were almost on the floor, quite drunken. Tea was extinct, and hardly consonant with the hour. I had no whisky, no beer, no coffee, a dead fire; I did my best by offering them two derelict chairs, covered with dead green leather surrounded by regular brass nails and a rickety cane-bottomed thing which I fetched out of the bedroom. There they sat in a ring around me. 'Oh, for some comfortable chairs, a bottle of champagne, and a silver box containing both Egyptians and Virginians,' I thought desperately. But there was nothing; I stuck to the awful arm-chair in my dressing-gown, and they, bolt upright, all these grandees, sat around me, sans-smoke, sans-drink, sans-everything, and were most extraordinarily civil.

'Why can't you start a subject?' thought I; 'you can't expect me to start one, for, learned though you may look, I haven't the faintest notion where your interests lie.' They all, for their seniority (they were all shy men, really) produced nothing at all; they were obviously nice and kind about my obvious inhospitable predicament, and I was grateful for them humanising my arrival. But one word about some subject of common interest would have got over my diffidence; Benians could have spoken about history, MacDonnell about the Union, of which he was President, or Joce about French Poetry. Cold to the marrow, and most kindly, they in the end went; I tucked myself into a too-thinly sheeted bed and thought, 'At any rate there are some extremely pleasant human beings in this College

[1] Now Master of St. John's College, Cambridge. [2] Now Sir Michael MacDonnell, sometime Chief Justice of Palestine. Be it understood, throughout this book, that this sort of footnote is only put in because it is expected.

though, of course, I shall never see them again, as they are very senior men.'

That may seem odd now to people who have been at Oxford and Cambridge since the war of 1914. I went up in a time of transition. When I went up, senior men, if so inclined, left cards on their juniors, and the calls had to be returned again and again until the seniors were found in. There was a great gulf fixed, as between new boys at a school and the others, between freshmen and their elders, unless, by good luck, they happened to have been at school together, and a Blue was something terrific. Shortly after I came down, everybody was going about with grey flannel trousers and no hat; today a freshman, provided he is congenial, calls a senior man 'Bill' after a week or two. But, when I went up, convention was strong. A freshman waited in tremors for the nod of a second-year man, and any unconventionality in dress put one beyond the pale—which, through sheer inadvertence, was my permanent dwelling. It was regarded as outrageous to go about with a soft hat (as I sometimes did) or with no hat (as I usually did): your head had to be always covered, and, on Sundays, whether you were going for a walk to Coton Church or to tea with your Tutor's wife, you had to have a quiet lounge-suit, a walking-stick, and a bowler-hat, which you parked (that word was not yet in fashion) as best you might when you arrived at your destination. The soft collar was not yet. I wore one myself, not for demonstration but for comfort's sake. But in all the old photographs of that era I see myself in a very high stiff choker; and I can't imagine why we did it or how we stood it.

* * *

That cold night I went to bed. In the morning the sun shone, and I could see a great fleecy tree-top, just beginning to turn, out of my high, remote window.

These reminiscences are extracts from an autobiography to be published by T. Werner Laurie, Ltd.

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This story appeared recently in America and has already become famous. It has been called a perfect example o the classic short-story form. I thought readers of World Review *might like to form their own opinion.*—Ed.

FOR ESMÉ—WITH LOVE AND SQUALOR

J. D. SALINGER

JUST recently by air mail, I received an invitation to a wedding that will take place in England on 18 April. It happens to be a wedding I'd give a lot to be able to get to, and when the invitation first arrived, I thought it might just be possible for me to make the trip abroad, by plane, expenses be hanged. However, I've since discussed the matter rather extensively with my wife, a breathtakingly levelheaded girl, and we've decided against it—for one thing, I'd completely forgotten that my mother-in-law is looking forward to spending the last two weeks in April with us. I really don't get to see Mother Grencher terribly often, and she's not getting any younger. She's fifty-eight. (As she'd be the first to admit.)

All the same, though, wher*ever* I happen to be, I don't think I'm the type that doesn't even lift a finger to prevent a wedding from flatting. Accordingly, I've gone ahead and jotted down a few revealing notes on the bride as I knew her almost six years ago. If my notes should cause the groom, whom I haven't met, an uneasy moment or two, so much the better. Nobody's aiming to please, here. More, really, to edify, to instruct.

In April of 1944, I was among some sixty American enlisted men who took a rather specialised pre-Invasion training course, directed by British Intelligence, in Devon, England. And as I look back, it seems to me that we were fairly unique, the sixty of us, in that there wasn't one good mixer in the bunch. We were all essentially letter-writing types, and when we spoke to each other out of the line of duty, it was usually to ask somebody if he had any ink he wasn't using. When we weren't writing letters or attending classes, each of us went pretty much his own way. Mine usually led me, on clear days, in scenic circles around the countryside. Rainy days, I generally sat in a dry place and read a book, often just an axe length away from a ping-pong table.

The training course lasted three weeks, ending on a Saturday, a very rainy one. At seven that last night, our whole group was scheduled to entrain for London, where, as rumour had it, we were to be assigned to infantry and airborne divisions mustered for the D-Day landings. By three in the afternoon, I'd packed all my belongings into my barrack bag, including a canvas gasmask container full of books I'd brought over from

the Other Side. (The gas mask itself I'd slipped through a porthole of the *Mauretania* some weeks earlier, fully aware that if the enemy ever *did* use gas I'd never get the damn thing on in time.) I remember standing at an end window of our Quonset hut for a very long time, looking out at the slanting, dreary rain, my trigger finger itching imperceptibly, if at all. I could hear behind my back the uncomradely scratching of many fountain pens on many sheets of V-mail paper. Abruptly, with nothing special in mind, I came away from the window and put on my raincoat, cashmere muffler, galoshes, woollen gloves, and overseas cap (the last of which, I'm still told, I wore at an angle all my own—slightly down over both ears). Then, after synchronising my wristwatch with the clock in the latrine, I walked down the long, wet cobblestone hill into town. I ignored the flashes of lightning all around me. They either had your number on them or they didn't.

In the centre of town, which was probably the wettest part of town, I stopped in front of a church to read the bulletin board, mostly because the featured numerals, white on black, had caught my attention but partly because, after three years in the Army, I'd become addicted to reading bulletin boards. At three-fifteen, the board stated, there would be children's-choir practice. I looked at my wrist-watch, then back at the board. A sheet of paper was tacked up, listing the names of the children expected to attend practice. I stood in the rain and read all the names, then entered the church.

A dozen or so adults were among the pews, several of them bearing pairs of small-size rubbers, soles up, in their laps. I passed along and sat down in the front row. On the rostrum, seated in three compact rows of auditorium chairs, were about twenty children, mostly girls, ranging in age from about seven to thirteen. At the moment, their choir coach, an enormous woman in tweeds, was advising them to open their mouths wider when they sang. Had anyone, she asked, ever heard of a little dickey-bird that *dared* to sing his charming song without first opening his little beak wide, wide, wide? Apparently nobody ever had. She was given a steady, opaque look. She went on to say that she wanted *all* her children to absorb the *meaning* of the words they sang, not just *mouth* them, like silly-billy parrots. She then blew a note on her pitch pipe, and the children, like so many under-age weight-lifters, raised their hymn books.

They sang without instrumental accompaniment—or, more accurately in their case, without any interference. Their voices were melodious and unsentimental, almost to the point where a somewhat more denominational man than myself might, without straining, have experienced levitation. A couple of the very youngest children dragged the tempo a trifle, but in a way that only the composer's mother could have found fault with. I had never heard the hymn, but I kept hoping it was one with a dozen or more verses. Listening, I scanned all the children's faces but watched one in particular, that of the child nearest me, on the end seat in

the first row. She was about thirteen, with straight ash-blond hair of earlobe length, an exquisite forehead, and blasé eyes that, I thought, might very possibly have counted the house. Her voice was distinctly separate from the other children's voices, and not just because she was seated nearest me. It had the best upper register, the sweetest-sounding, the surest, and it automatically led the way. The young lady, however, seemed slightly bored with her own singing ability, or perhaps just with the time and place; twice, between verses, I saw her yawn. It was a ladylike yawn, a closed-mouth yawn, but you couldn't miss it; her nostril wings gave her away.

The instant the hymn ended, the choir coach began to give her lengthy opinion of people who can't keep their feet still and their lips sealed tight during the minister's sermon. I gathered that the singing part of the rehearsal was over, and before the coach's dissonant speaking voice could entirely break the spell the children's singing had cast, I got up and left the church.

It was raining even harder. I walked down the street and looked through the window of the Red Cross recreation room, but soldiers were standing two and three deep at the coffee counter, and, even through the glass, I could hear ping-pong balls bouncing in another room. I crossed the street and entered a civilian tearoom, which was empty except for a middle-aged waitress, who looked as if she would have preferred a customer with a dry raincoat. I used a coat tree as delicately as possible, and then sat down at a table and ordered tea and cinnamon toast. It was the first time all day that I'd spoken to anyone. I then looked through all my pockets, including my raincoat, and finally found a couple of stale letters to re-read, one from my wife, telling me how the service at Schrafft's Eighty-eighth Street had fallen off, and one from my mother-in-law, asking me to please send her some cashmere yarn first chance I got away from 'camp'.

While I was still on my first cup of tea, the young lady I had been watching and listening to in the choir came into the tearoom. Her hair was soaking wet, and the rims of both ears were showing. She was with a very small boy, unmistakably her brother, whose cap she removed by lifting it off his head with two fingers, as if it were a laboratory specimen. Bringing up the rear was an efficient-looking woman in a limp felt hat—presumably their governess. The choir member, taking off her coat as she walked across the floor, made the table selection—a good one, from my point of view, as it was just eight or ten feet directly in front of me. She and the governess sat down. The small boy, who was about five, wasn't ready to sit down yet. He slid out of and discarded his reefer; then, with the deadpan expression of a born heller, he methodically went about annoying his governess by pushing in and pulling out his chair several times, watching her face. The governess, keeping her voice down, gave him two or three

orders to sit down and, in effect, stop the monkey business, but it was only when his sister spoke to him that he came around and applied the small of his back to his chair seat. He immediately picked up his napkin and put it on his head. His sister removed it, opened it, and spread it out on his lap.

About the time their tea was brought, the choir member caught me staring over at her party. She stared back at me, with those house-counting eyes of hers, then, abruptly, gave me a small, qualified smile. It was oddly radiant, as certain, small, qualified smiles sometimes are. I smiled back, much less radiantly, keeping my upper lip down over a coal-black G.I. temporary filling showing between two of my front teeth. The next thing I knew, the young lady was standing, with enviable poise, beside my table. She was wearing a tartan dress—a Campbell tartan, I believe. It seemed to me to be a wonderful dress for a very young girl to be wearing on a rainy, rainy day. 'I thought Americans despised tea,' she said.

It wasn't the observation of a smart aleck but that of a truth-lover or a statistics-lover. I replied that some of us never drank anything *but* tea. I asked her if she'd care to join me.

'Thank you,' she said. 'Perhaps for just a fraction of a moment.'

I got up and drew a chair for her, the one opposite me, and she sat down on the forward quarter of it, keeping her spine easily and beautifully straight. I went back—almost hurried back—to my own chair, more than willing to hold up my end of a conversation. When I was seated, I couldn't think of anything to say, though. I smiled again, still keeping my coal-black filling under concealment. I remarked that it was certainly a terrible day out.

'Yes; quite,' said my guest, in the clear, unmistakable voice of a small-talk detester. She placed her fingers flat on the table edge, like someone at a seance, then, almost instantly, closed her hands—her nails were bitten down to the quick. She was wearing a wristwatch, a military-looking one that looked rather like a navigator's chronograph. Its face was much too large for her slender wrist. 'You were at choir practice,' she said matter-of-factly. 'I saw you.'

I said I certainly had been, and that I had heard her voice singing separately from the others. I said I thought she had a very fine voice.

She nodded. 'I know. I'm going to be a professional singer.'

'Really? Opera?'

'Heavens, no. I'm going to sing jazz on the radio and make heaps of money. Then, when I'm thirty, I shall retire and live on a ranch in Ohio.' She touched the top of her soaking-wet head with the flat of her hand. 'Do you know Ohio?' she asked.

I said I'd been through it on the train a few times but that I didn't really know it. I offered her a piece of cinnamon toast.

'No, thank you,' she said. 'I eat like a bird, actually.'

I bit into a piece of toast myself, and commented that there's some mighty rough country around Ohio.

'I know. An American I met told me. You're the eleventh American I've met.'

Her governess was now urgently signalling her to return to her own table—in effect, to stop bothering the man. My guest, however, calmly moved her chair an inch or two so that her back broke all possible further communication with the home table. 'You go to that secret Intelligence school on the hill, don't you?' she inquired coolly.

As security-minded as the next one, I replied that I was visiting Devonshire for my health.

'*Real*ly,' she said, 'I wasn't quite born yesterday, you know.'

I said I'd bet she hadn't been, at that. I drank my tea for a moment. I was getting a trifle posture-conscious and I sat up somewhat straighter in my seat.

'You seem quite intelligent for an American,' my guest mused.

I told her that was a pretty snobbish thing to say, if you thought about it at all, and that I hoped it was unworthy of her.

She blushed—automatically conferring on me the social poise I'd been missing. 'Well. Most of the Americans *I've* seen act like animals. They're forever punching one another about, and insulting everyone, and— You know what one of them did?'

I shook my head.

'One of them threw an empty whisky bottle through my aunt's window. *For*tunately, the window was open. But does that sound very intelligent to you?'

It didn't especially, but I didn't say so. I said that many soldiers, all over the world, were a long way from home, and that few of them had had many real advantages in life. I said I'd thought that most people could figure that out for themselves.

'Possibly,' said my guest, without conviction. She raised her hand to her wet head again, picked at a few limp filaments of blond hair, trying to cover her exposed ear rims. 'My hair is soaking wet,' she said. 'I look a fright.' She looked over at me. 'I have quite wavy hair when it's dry.'

'I can see that, I can see you have.'

'Not actually curly, but quite wavy,' she said. 'Are you married?'

I said I was.

She nodded. 'Are you very deeply in love with your wife? Or am I being too personal?'

I said that when she was, I'd speak up.

She put her hands and wrists farther forward on the table, and I remember wanting to do something about that enormous-faced wristwatch she was wearing—perhaps suggest that she try wearing it round her waist.

'Usually, I'm not terribly gregarious,' she said, and looked over at me to see if I knew the meaning of the word. I didn't give her a sign, though, one way or the other. 'I purely came over because I thought you looked extremely lonely. You have an extremely sensitive face.'

I said she was right, that I *had* been feeling lonely, and that I was very glad she'd come over.

'I'm training myself to be more compassionate. My aunt says I'm a terribly cold person,' she said, and felt the top of her head again. 'I live with my aunt. She's an extremely kind person. Since the death of my mother, she's done everything within her power to make Charles and me feel adjusted.'

'I'm glad.'

'Mother was an extremely intelligent person. Quite sensuous, in many ways.' She looked at me with a kind of fresh acuteness. 'Do you find me terribly cold?'

I told her absolutely not—very much to the contrary, in fact. I told her my name and asked for hers.

She hesitated. 'My first name is Esmé. I don't think I shall tell you my full name, for the moment. I have a title and you may just be impressed by titles. Americans are, you know.'

I said I didn't think I would be, but that it might be a good idea, at that, to hold on to the title for a while.

Just then, I felt someone's warm breath on the back of my neck. I turned around and just missed brushing noses with Esmé's small brother. Ignoring me, he addressed his sister in a piercing treble: 'Miss Megley said you must come and finish your tea!' His message delivered, he retired to the chair between his sister and me, on my right. I regarded him with high interest. He was looking very splendid in brown Shetland shorts, a navy-blue jersey, white shirt, and striped necktie. He gazed back at me with immense green eyes. 'Why do people in films kiss sideways?' he demanded.

'Sideways?' I said. It was a problem that had baffled me in my own childhood. I said I guessed it was because actors' noses are too big for kissing anyone head on.

'His name is Charles,' Esmé said. 'He's extremely brilliant for his age.'

'He certainly has green eyes. Haven't you, Charles?'

Charles gave me the fishy look my question deserved, then wriggled downward and forward in his chair till all of his body was under the table except his head, which he left, wrestler's-bridge style, on the chair seat. 'They're orange,' he said in a strained voice, addressing the ceiling. He picked up a corner of the tablecloth and put it over his handsome, deadpan little face.

'Sometimes he's brilliant and sometimes he's not,' Esmé said. 'Charles, do sit up!'

Charles stayed right where he was. He seemed to be busy holding his breath.

'He misses our father very much. He was s-l-a-i-n in North Africa.'

I expressed regret to hear it.

Esmé nodded. 'Father adored him.' She bit reflectively at the cuticle of her thumb. 'He looks very much like my mother—Charles, I mean. I look exactly like my father.' She went on biting at her cuticle. 'My mother was quite a passionate woman. She was an extravert. Father was an introvert. They were quite well mated, though, in a superficial way. To be quite candid, Father really needed more of an intellectual companion than Mother was. He was an extremely gifted genius.'

I waited, receptively, for further information, but none came. I looked down at Charles, who was now resting the side of his face on his chair seat. When he saw that I was looking at him, he closed his eyes, sleepily, angelically, then stuck out his tongue—an appendage of startling length—and gave out what in *my* country would have been a glorious tribute to a myopic baseball umpire. It fairly shook the tearoom.

'Stop that,' Esmé said, clearly unshaken. 'He saw an American do it in a fish-and-chips queue, and now he does it whenever he's bored. Just stop it, now, or I shall send you directly to Miss Megley.'

Charles opened his enormous eyes as sign that he'd heard his sister's threat, but otherwise didn't look especially alerted. He closed his eyes again, and continued to rest the side of his face on the chair seat.

I mentioned that maybe he ought to save it—meaning the Bronx cheer—till he started using his title regularly. That is, if he had a title, too.

Esmé gave me a long, faintly clinical look. 'You have a dry sense of humour, haven't you?' she said—wistfully. 'Father said I have no sense of humour at all. He said I was unequipped to meet life because I have no sense of humour.'

Watching her, I lit a cigarette and said I didn't think a sense of humour was of any use in a real pinch.

'Father said it was.'

This was a statement of faith, not a contradiction, and I quickly switched horses. I nodded and said her father had probably taken the long view, while I was taking the short (whatever *that* meant).

'Charles misses him exceedingly,' Esmé said, after a moment. 'He was an exceedingly lovable man. He was extremely handsome, too. Not that one's appearance matters greatly, but he was. He had terribly penetrating eyes, for a man who was intrinsically kind.'

I nodded. I said I imagined her father had had quite an extraordinary vocabulary.

'Oh yes; quite.' said Esmé. He was an archivist—amateur, of course.'

At that point, I felt an importunate tap, almost a punch, on my upper

arm, from Charles' direction. I turned to him. He was sitting in a fairly normal position in his chair now, except that he had one knee tucked under him. 'What did one wall say to the other wall?' he asked shrilly. 'It's a riddle!'

I rolled my eyes reflectively ceilingward and repeated the question aloud. Then I looked at Charles with a stumped expression and said I gave up.

'Meet you at the corner!' came the punch line, at top volume.

It went over biggest with Charles himself. It struck him as unbearably funny. In fact, Esmé had to come around and pound him on the back, as if treating him for a coughing spell. 'Now, stop that,' she said. She went back to her own seat. 'He tells that same riddle to everyone he meets and has a fit every single time. Usually he drools when he laughs. Now, just stop, please.'

'It's one of the best riddles I've heard, though,' I said, watching Charles, who was very gradually coming out of it. In response to this compliment, he sank considerably lower in his chair and again masked his face up to the eyes with a corner of the tablecloth. He then looked at me with his exposed eyes, which were full of slowly subsiding mirth and the pride of someone who knows a really good riddle or two.

'May I inquire how you were employed before entering the Army?' Esmé asked me.

I said I hadn't been employed at all, that I'd only been out of college a year but that I liked to think of myself as a professional short-story writer.

She nodded politely. 'Published?' she asked.

It was a familiar but always touchy question, and one that I didn't answer just one, two, three. I explained how most editors in America were a bunch—

'My father wrote beautifully,' Esmé interrupted. 'I'm saving a number of his letters for posterity.'

I said that sounded like a very good idea. I happened to be looking at her enormous-faced, chronographic-looking wristwatch again. I asked if it had belonged to her father.

She looked down at her wrist solemnly. 'Yes, it did,' she said. 'He gave it to me just before Charles and I were evacuated.' Self-consciously, she took her hands off the table, saying, 'Purely as a momento, of course'. She guided the conversation in a different direction. 'I'd be extremely flattered if you'd write a story exclusively for me sometime. I'm an avid reader.'

I told her I certainly would, if I could. I said that I wasn't terribly prolific.

'It doesn't have to be terribly prolific! Just so that it isn't childish and silly.' She reflected. 'I prefer stories about squalor.'

'About what?' I said, leaning forward.

'Squalor. I'm extremely interested in squalor.'

I was about to press her for more details, but I felt Charles pinching me, hard, on my arm. I turned to him, wincing slightly. He was standing right next to me. 'What did one wall say to the other wall?' he asked, not unfamiliarly.

'You asked him that,' Esmé said. 'Now, stop it.'

Ignoring his sister, and stepping up on one of my feet, Charles repeated the key question. I noticed that his necktie knot wasn't adjusted properly. I slid it up into place, then, looking him straight in the eye, suggested, 'Meetcha at the corner?'

The instant I'd said it, I wished I hadn't. Charles' mouth fell open. I felt as if I'd struck it open. He stepped down off my foot and, with white-hot dignity, walked over to his own table, without looking back.

'He's furious,' Esmé said. He has a violent temper. My mother had a propensity to spoil him. My father was the only one who didn't spoil him.'

I kept looking over at Charles, who had sat down and started to drink his tea, using both hands on the cup. I hoped he'd turn around, but he didn't.

Esmé stood up. '*Il faut que je parte aussi*,' she said, with a sigh. 'Do you know French?'

I got up from my own chair with mixed feelings of regret and confusion. Esmé and I shook hands; her hand, as I'd suspected, was a nervous hand, damp at the palm. I told her, in English, how very much I'd enjoyed her company.

She nodded. 'I thought you might,' she said. 'I'm quite communicative for my age.' She gave her hair another experimental touch. 'I'm dreadfully sorry about my hair,' she said. 'I've probably been hideous to look at.'

'Not at all! As a matter of fact, I think a lot of the wave is coming back already.'

She quickly touched her hair again. 'Do you think you'll be coming here again in the immediate future?' she asked. 'We come here every Saturday, after choir practice.'

I answered that I'd like nothing better but that, unfortunately, I was pretty sure I wouldn't be able to make it again.

'In other words, you can't discuss troop movements,' said Esmé. She made no move to leave the vicinity of the table. In fact, she crossed one foot over the other and, looking down, aligned the toes of her shoes. It was a pretty little execution, for she was wearing white socks and her ankles and feet were lovely. She looked up at me abruptly. 'Would you like me to write to you?' she asked, with a certain amount of colour in her face. 'I write extremely articulate letters for a person my—'

'I'd love it.' I took out pencil and paper and wrote down my name, rank, serial number, and A.P.O. number.

Esmé was standing with crossed ankles again. 'You're quite sure you

won't forget to write that story for me?' she asked. 'It doesn't have to be ex*clus*ively for me. It can—'

I said there was absolutely no chance that I'd forget. I told her that I'd never written a story *for* anybody, but that it seemed like exactly the right time to get down to it.

She nodded. 'Make it extremely squalid and moving,' she suggested. 'Are you at all acquainted with squalor?'

I said not exactly but that I was getting better acquainted with it, in one form or another, all the time, and that I'd do my best to come up to her specifications. We shook hands.

'Isn't it a pity that we didn't meet under less extenuating circumstances?'

I said it was, I said it certainly was.

'Goodbye,' Esmé said. 'I hope you return from the war with all your faculties intact.'

I thanked her, and said a few other words, and then watched her leave the tearoom. She left it slowly, reflectively, testing the ends of her hair for dryness.

This is the squalid, or moving, part of the story, and the scene changes. The people change, too. I'm still around, but from here on in, for reasons I'm not at liberty to disclose, I've disguised myself so cunningly that even the cleverest reader will fail to recognise me.

It was about ten-thirty at night in Gaufurt, Bavaria, several weeks after V-E Day. Staff Sergeant X was in his room on the second floor of the civilian home in which he and nine other American soldiers had been quartered, even before the armistice. He was seated on a folding wooden chair at a small, messy-looking writing table, with a paperback overseas novel open before him, which he was having great trouble reading. The trouble lay with him, not the novel. Although the men who lived on the first floor usually had first grab at the books sent each month by Special Services, X usually seemed to be left with the book he might have selected himself. But he was a young man who had not come through the war with all his faculties intact, and for more than an hour he had been triple-reading paragraphs, and now he was doing it to the sentences. He suddenly closed the book, without marking his place. With his hand, he shielded his eyes for a moment against the harsh, watty glare from the naked bulb over the table.

He took a cigarette from a pack on the table and lit it with fingers that bumped gently and incessantly against one another. He sat back a trifle in his chair and smoked without any sense of taste. He had been chain-smoking for weeks. His gums bled at the slightest pressure of the tip of his tongue,

and he seldom stopped experimenting; it was a little game he played, sometimes by the hour. He sat for a moment smoking and experimenting. Then, abruptly, familiarly, and, as usual, with no warning, he thought he felt his mind dislodge itself and teeter, like insecure luggage on an overhead rack. He quickly did what he had been doing for weeks to set things right: he pressed his hands hard against his temples. He held on tight for a moment. His hair needed cutting, and it was dirty. He had washed it three or four times during his two weeks' stay at the hospital in Frankfurt on the Main, but it had got dirty again on the long dusty jeep ride back to Gaufurt. Corporal Z, who had called for him at the hospital, still drove a jeep combat-style, with the windshield down on the hood, armistice or no armistice. There were thousands of new troops in Germany. By driving with his windshield down, combat-style, Corporal Z hoped to show that he was not one of them, that not by a long shot was he some new son of a bitch in the E.T.O.

When he let go of his head, X began to stare at the surface of the writing table, which was a catchall for at least two dozen unopened letters and at least five or six unopened packages, all addressed to him. He reached behind the debris and picked out a book that stood against the wall. It was a book by Goebbels, entitled *Zeit Ohne Beispiel*. It belonged to the thirty-eight-year-old, unmarried daughter of the family that, up to a few weeks earlier, had been living in the house. She had been a low official in the Nazi Party, but high enough, by Army Regulations standards, to fall into an automatic-arrest category. X himself had arrested her. Now, for the third time since he had returned from the hospital that day, he opened the woman's book and read the brief inscription on the flyleaf. Written in ink, in German, in a small, hopelessly sincere handwriting, were the words 'Dear God, life is hell.' Nothing led up to or away from it. Alone on the page and in the sickly stillness of the room, the words appeared to have the stature of an incontestable, even classic indictment. X stared at the page for several minutes, trying, against heavy odds, not to be taken in. Then, with far more zeal than he had done anything in weeks, he picked up a pencil stub and wrote down under the inscription, in English, 'Fathers and teachers, I ponder "What is hell?" I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love.' He started to write Dostoievski's name under the inscription, but saw—with fright that ran through his whole body—that what he had written was almost entirely illegible. He shut the book.

He quickly picked up something else from the table, a letter from his older brother in Albany. It had been on his table even before he had checked into the hospital. He opened the envelope, loosely resolved to read the letter straight through, but read only the top half of the first page. He stopped after the words 'Now that the g.d. war is over and you probably have a lot of time over there, how about sending the kids a couple of

bayonets or swastikas . . .' After he'd torn it up, he looked down at the pieces as they lay in the waste-basket. He saw that he had overlooked an enclosed snapshot. He could make out somebody's feet standing on a lawn somewhere.

He put his arms on the table and rested his head on them. He ached from head to foot, all zones of pain seemingly interdependent. He was rather like a Christmas tree whose lights, wired in series, must all go out if even one bulb is defective.

The door banged open, without having been rapped on. X raised his head, turned it, and saw Corporal Z standing in the door. Corporal Z had been X's jeep partner and constant companion from D-Day straight through five campaigns of the war. He lived on the first floor and he usually came up to see X when he had a few rumours or gripes to unload. He was a huge, photogenic young man of twenty-four. During the war, a national magazine had photographed him in Hürtgen Forest; he had posed with a Thanksgiving turkey in each hand. 'Ya writin' letters?' he asked X. 'It's spooky in here, for Chrissake.' He preferred always to enter a room that had the overhead light on.

X turned around in his chair and asked him to come in, and to be careful not to step on the dog.

'The what?'

'Alvin, He's right under your feet, Clay. How 'bout turning on the goddam light?'

Clay found the overhead-light switch, flicked it on, then stepped across the puny, servant's-size room and sat down on the edge of the bed, facing his host. His brick-red hair, just combed, was dripping with the amount of water he required for satisfactory grooming. A comb with a fountain-pen clip protruded, familiarly, from the right-hand pocket of his olive-drab shirt. Over the left-hand pocket he was wearing the Combat Infantrymen's Badge (which technically, he wasn't authorised to wear), the European Theatre ribbon, with five bronze battle stars in it (instead of a lone silver one, which was the equivalent of five bronze ones), and the pre-Pearl Harbour service ribbon. He sighed heavily and said, 'Christ Almighty'. It meant nothing; it was Army. He took a pack of cigarettes from his shirt pocket, tapped one out, then put away the pack and rebuttoned the pocket flap. Smoking, he looked vacuously around the room. His look finally settled on the radio. 'Hey,' he said. 'They got this terrific show comin' on the radio in a coupla minutes. Bob Hope, and everybody.'

X, opening a fresh pack of cigarettes, said he had just turned the radio off.

Undarkened, Clay watched X trying to get a cigarette lit. 'Jesus,' he said, with spectator's enthusiasm, 'you oughta see your goddam hands. Boy, have you got the shakes. Ya know that?'

X got his cigarette lit, nodded, and said Clay had a real eye for detail.

'No kidding, hey. I goddam near fainted when I saw you at the hospital. You looked like a goddam *corpse*. How much weight ya lose? How many pounds? Ya know?'

'I don't know. How was your mail when I was gone? You heard from Loretta?'

Loretta was Clay's girl. They intended to get married at their earliest convenience. She wrote to him fairly regularly, from a paradise of triple exclamation points and inaccurate observations. All through the war, Clay had read all Loretta's letters aloud to X, however intimate they were—in fact, the more intimate, the better. It was his custom after each reading, to ask X to plot out or pad out the letter of reply, or to insert a few impressive words in French or German.

'Yeah, I had a letter from her yesterday. Down in my room. Show it to ya later,' Clay said, listlessly. He sat up straight on the edge of the bed, held his breath, and issued a long, resonant belch. Looking just semi-pleased with the achievement, he relaxed again. 'Her goddam brother's getting outa the Navy on account of his hip,' he said. 'He's got this hip, the bastard.' He sat up again and tried for another belch, but with below-par results. A jot of alertness came into his face. 'Hey. Before I forget. We gotta get up at five tomorrow and drive to Hamburg or someplace. Pick up Eisenhower jackets for the whole detachment.'

X, regarding him hostilely, stated that he didn't want an Eisenhower jacket.

Clay looked surprised, almost a trifle hurt. 'Oh, they're good! They look good. How come?'

'No reason. Why do we have to get up at five? The war's over, for God's sake.'

'I don't know—we gotta get back before lunch. They got some new forms in we gotta fill out before lunch. . . . I asked Bulling how come we couldn't fill 'em out tonight—he's *got* the goddam forms right on his desk. He don't want to open the envelopes yet, the son of a bitch.'

The two sat quiet for a moment, hating Bulling.

Clay suddenly looked at X with new—higher—interest than before. 'Hey,' he said. 'Did you know the goddam side of your face is jumping all over the place?'

X said he knew all about it, and covered his tic with his hand.

Clay stared at him for a moment, then said, rather vividly, as if he were the bearer of exceptionally good news, 'I wrote Loretta you had a nervous breakdown.'

'Oh?'

'Yeah. She's interested as hell in all that stuff. She's majoring in psychology.' Clay stretched himself out on the bed, shoes included. 'You

know what she said? She says nobody gets a nervous breakdown just from the war and all. She says you probably were unstable like, your whole goddam life.'

X bridged his hand over his eyes—the light over the bed seemed to be blinding him—and said that Loretta's insight into things was always a joy.

Clay glanced over at him. 'Listen, ya bastard,' he said. 'She knows a goddam sight more psychology than *you* do.'

'Do you think you can bring yourself to take your stinking feet off my bed?' X asked.

Clay left his feet where they were for a few don't-tell-me-where-to-put-my-feet seconds, then swung them around to the floor and sat up. 'I'm goin' downstairs anyway. They got the radio on in Walker's room.' He didn't get up from the bed, though. 'Hey. I was just tellin' that new son of a bitch, Bernstein, downstairs. Remember that time I and you drove into Valognes, and we got shelled for about two goddam hours, and that goddam cat I shot that jumped up on the hood of the jeep when we were layin' in that hole? Remember?'

'Yes—don't start that business with that cat again, Clay, God damn it. I don't want to hear about it.'

'No, all I mean is I wrote Loretta about it. She and the whole psychology class discussed it. In class and all. The goddam professor and everybody.'

'That's fine. I don't want to hear about it, Clay.'

'No, you know the reason I took a pot shot at it, Loretta says? She says I was temporarily insane. No kidding. From the shelling and all.'

X threaded his fingers, once, through his dirty hair, then shielded his eyes against the light again. 'You weren't insane. You were simply doing your duty. You killed that pussycat in as manly a way as anybody could've, under the circumstances.'

Clay looked at him suspiciously. 'What the hell are you talkin' about?'

'That cat was a spy. You *had* to take a pot shot at it. It was a very clever German midget dressed up in a cheap fur coat. So there was absolutely nothing brutal, or cruel, or dirty, or even—'

'God damn it!' Clay said, his lips thinned. 'Can't you ever be *sincere*?'

X suddenly felt sick, and he swung around in his chair and grabbed the wastebasket—just in time.

When he had straightened up and turned toward his guest again, he found him standing, embarrassed, halfway between the bed and the door. X started to apologise, but changed his mind and reached for his cigarettes.

'C'mon down and listen to Hope on the radio, hey,' Clay said, keeping his distance but trying to be friendly over it. 'It'll do ya good. I mean it.'

'You go ahead, Clay. . . . I'll look at my stamp collection.'

'Yeah? You got a stamp collection? I didn't know you—'

'I'm only kidding.'

Clay took a couple of slow steps toward the door. 'I may drive over to Ehstadt later,' he said. 'They got a dance. It'll probably last till around two. Wanna go?'

'No thanks. . . . I may practice a few steps in the room.'

'O.K. G'night! Take it easy, now, for Chrissake.' The door slammed shut, then instantly opened again. 'Hey. O.K. if I leave a letter to Loretta under your door? I got some German stuff in it. Willya fix it up for me?'

'Yes. Leave me alone now, God damn it.'

'Sure,' said Clay. 'You know what my mother wrote me? She wrote me she's glad you and I were together and all the whole war. In the same jeep and all. She says my letters are a helluva lot more intelligent since we been goin' around together.'

X looked up and over at him, and said, with great effort, 'Thanks. Tell her thanks for me'.

'I will. G'night!' The door slammed shut, this time for good.

X sat looking at the door for a long while, then turned his chair around toward the writing table and picked up his portable typewriter from the floor. He made space for it on the messy table surface, pushing aside the collapsed pile of unopened letters and packages. He thought if he wrote a letter to an old friend of his in New York there might be some quick, however slight, therapy in it for him. But he couldn't insert his notepaper into the roller properly, his fingers were shaking so violently now. He put his hands down at his sides for a minute, then tried again, but finally crumpled the notepaper in his hand.

He was aware that he ought to get the wastebasket out of the room, but instead of doing anything about it, he put his arms on the typewriter and rested his head again, closing his eyes.

A few throbbing minutes later, when he opened his eyes, he found himself squinting at a small, unopened package wrapped in green paper. It had probably slipped off the pile when he had made space for the typewriter. He saw that it had been readdressed several times. He could make out, on just one side of the package, at least three of his old A.P.O. numbers.

He opened the package without any interest, without even looking at the return address. He opened it by burning the string with a lighted match. He was more interested in watching the string burn all the way down than in opening the package, but he opened it, finally.

Inside the box, a note written in ink, lay on top of a small object wrapped in tissue paper. He picked out the note and read it.

17, ——— Road,
———, Devon,
June 7, 1944

Dear Sergeant X,

I hope you will forgive me for having taken 38 days to begin our correspondence, but I have been extremely busy as my aunt has undergone streptococcus of the throat and nearly perished and I have been justifiably saddled with one responsibility after another. However I have thought of you frequently and of the extremely pleasant afternoon we spent in each other's company on April 30, 1944, between 3.45 and 4.15 P.M. in case it slipped your mind.

We are all tremendously excited and overawed about D-Day and only hope that it will bring about the swift termination of the war and a method of existence that is ridiculous to say the least. Charles and I are both quite concerned about you; we hope you were not among those who made the first initial assault upon the Cotentin Peninsula. Were you? Please reply as speedily as possible. My warmest regards to your wife.

Sincerely yours,

Esmé

P.S. I am taking the liberty of enclosing my wristwatch which you may keep in your possession for the duration of the conflict. I did not observe whether you were wearing one during our brief association, but this one is extremely waterproof and shock-proof as well as having many other virtues among which one can tell at what velocity one is walking if one wishes. I am quite certain that you will use it to greater advantage in these difficult days than I ever can and that you will accept it as a lucky talisman.

Charles, whom I am teaching to read and write and whom I am finding an extremely intelligent novice, wishes to add a few words. Please write as soon as you have the time and inclination.

HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO
HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO
LOVE AND KISSES CHARLES

It was a long time before X could set the note aside, let alone lift Esmé's father's wristwatch out of the box. When he did finally lift it out, he saw that its crystal had been broken in transit. He wondered if the watch was otherwise undamaged, but he hadn't the courage to wind it and find out. He just sat with it in his hand for another long period. Then, suddenly, almost ecstatically, he felt sleepy.

You take a really sleepy man, Esmé, and he *al*ways stands a chance of again becoming a man with all his fac—with all his f-a-c-u-l-t-i-e-s intact.

THE THREE WIDOWS

A. E. COPPARD

THREE widows sat on a bench in a railway waiting-room discoursing on their common sorrow, for they had their common sorrow to grieve over, besides other things to complain of, in the gloomy one-sided silent country station. How they came to converge upon just that conjunction of time and place does not signify, is neither here nor there; fate has its own little cantrips; chance is nobody's toy. And the station was the one solitary building on a wild marsh, scrubby, scrofulous, be-brambled and otherwise desolate, and so depressing in the gloom of the day that even the bullocks inhabiting there hadn't a bellow left among them. Not a coppice or a farm was established; no road came here, save the one rough track that straggled to the station and no further; nor was any village to be seen with some old church drowsing behind rich trees.

Across the marsh the railway track ran north-south. A few miles westward you would come upon a sunken river, and further still the unseen sea would be shining on days that were not so gloomy. Wherever you walk in the world—wherever, travel how you will!—you must in course of time come to the shore of the sea, and there's no further to be gone in that direction. It is not possible to ignore it, for there it is, there it surely is, soaking and sinking in the waters of the ocean. And there's nothing to be done about that—not until the close of a large piece of history, anyway.

The three stranger women—for they *were* strangers, unknown to one another before this meeting—were talking together while waiting for the train; nice women, likeable—well, two of them were—and of dissimilar ages. Sylvia Pryde, the sad-eyed and youngest, fresh as dew and lustrous as a pearl, was of a superior class and dressed with taste. A lady. The second, Biddy Ashpole, was not quite that, but she had had beauty in her day for the signs of it still beamed in her eyes and were not altogether gone from her figure. For the other one there may, once upon a time, have been something to admire in her, though there was little enough now; Eva Gospedal had the appearance of a wanderer: shabby, sour, and unresting, with a burden on her back, a tightly-stuffed haversack which she did not dislodge.

'Whyn't you shift that bundle off and ease your shoulders?' Mrs. Ashpole remarked after they had conversed awhile.

The pilgrim would not loosen it, but shook her head.

After conferring with each other about the places they were journeying

to—they were different places, Wanhope, Swivel, and Pitfall—the two elder women gossiped consolingly with the young widow, whose black weeds indicated recent woe; both told her that they also had borne such bereavement at one time or another—not so lately, look you, but neither so very long ago. What a grief that ne'er a one of them had a child to grace her widowhood! Curious. Three women converging so oddly, at a spot so remote; each a widow, each with a tale to tell and no man to cherish her, no child to tend and be loved by, not one of them!

'Whyn't you rest that bundle?' repeated Mrs. Ashpole, turning and stretching her hand towards it. No hint of train yet, no signal down; but Eva Gospedal shook her head dissentingly. 'Why not? 'Twon't be here for another half-hour.' Eva ignored her.

Then to a murmured question Mrs. Pryde made answer: 'Three months ago'.

'Three months!' Biddy Ashpole echoed. 'Eh! La! Was you married long?'

'Three weeks,' was the reply.

'Three weeks!' Biddy's tone was full of pity. 'Dear heart! Only three weeks! An invalid was he?'

'No. Strong. Very strong, you'd have taken a lease on his life. But he died suddenly, all of a sudden; it was like a lamp going out. You know? For no reason as far as doctors could tell, none at all, but he died.'

'Dear, dear, dear!' Mrs. Ashpole looked sad, sighed sadly, and may even have been truly sympathetic, for much besides disease is contagious. 'That's the hard thing about life; we all have to go, don't we? Some sooner than others, but all of us soon enough, please God. You're never sure, are you, never ready?' With an air of eminent disconsolation she added: 'My husband went off eighteen months ago.'

'Went off?' demanded Mrs. Gospedal.

'Yes, with the pneumonia.'

'Tch! That's bad.'

'Yes, it was the double.'

'Oh dear, that's hopeless, that is.'

'Yes, indeed, poor soul. Double and treble. In two days he was cold.'

'Dead?'

'Oh yes, he died. Still,' and here Mrs. Ashpole resolutely threw off a dawning semblance of melancholy, 'I'd had twenty years of him, more or less. Keep your good health and luck's your neighbour, I say. But this young lady—cruel! You wonder what the Almighty's thinking about up there.'

The beautiful young woman protested at once. 'Oh no!' she startlingly breathed, 'God is here in *this* world, or He is nowhere at all.'

'You . . . think . . . that?' Biddy asked.

'Hush!' Mrs. Pryde even gave a faint smile.

On hearing her speak thus, Mrs. Ashpole sensed that the young widow had gone truly religious, and this caused her to retreat into herself, momentarily, as a person will do when surprised by a strangeness. But Mrs. Pryde was so gently spoken, so handsome, so unlike anyone vowed and bigoted, that the embarrassment quickly passed off.

'But still He does seem to pick on some more than others,' Biddy contended. 'Only sometimes, that's all I mean.'

'Don't say it!' The young widow spoke anxiously. 'Please don't say it. We are all one in His eyes.'

'Oh, of course,' Biddy said. 'I know what you mean, and it's true. But we don't all look alike, do we? And who's He looking out for any time now? You can't tell, can you? Who's He looking for this minute?'

'Hush!' Mrs. Pryde begged again, and the dangerous conversation was diverted to a less disquieting theme.

'You've got all your life before you, ma'am,' said Biddy. 'But I've not, as you can see. No doubt you'll marry again?'

'No!' The young widow was so emphatic that Mrs. Ashpole was checked for a moment before she returned archly: 'Oh, but you're sure to change your mind!'

'Never, never!' was the quick disavowal, uttered in a tone breathing the conviction, the authority and awareness of one who had shared in a glimmer, though so brief, of an eternal joy. Her dead man, she steadfastly believed and was moved to convey, had excelled in the dear impulses, the fidelity, the divinity of love, in which was all romance, all glory, sole theme, true beauty. Her warm eulogy dashed the others with a slight but not unpleasant awe, as though that star glimmering in her sky had suddenly burst into streams of cascading richness.

Then, quietly, the door of the waiting-room was pushed open halfway. A man, wearing a drab apron and railway hat, but no coat, looked round the door and stared at the women with a disturbing stare, for one of his eyes was cast—maybe both—and it ranged so obliquely as to give a devilish twist to his gaze. It was only the stationmaster in dishabille; besides his mastership, he was the general and entire factotum: ticket-issuer, collector, banker, trimmer of lamps, registrar of freight, signal manipulator, cleaner of windows and sweeper of dusty floors. He did not accost the women, but they silently wished him away, while he stooped and polished the brass handle of the door, although it certainly had no need of such attention; which done, he crossed the room morosely to sweep his duster along a shelf that had accumulated no dust, and then, with hopeless air, departed as he came.

Following that wordless interlude, Sylvia resumed, to Biddy Ashpole: 'Would *you* marry again?'

'I'm over old for that canter,' Biddy said with an unreal laugh. 'What man 'ud look twice at me now?'

'Oh!' Sylvia laughingly asserted, 'you are still handsome.'

'Still! Ha, ha, you could have sworn to that once on a time, not so long ago, on my oath you could. And been true, too. But as for now, no thank you, not now. When you've been everlasting trying to please a man that took no pleasure in you, you wear out sooner than is right and proper. Or fair either. Because he lasted a long time, he did, over twenty years, and now I'm old . . . '

'Oh, tut!' Mrs. Pryde interjected scoffingly.

'Well, quite middle-aged anyhow, and useless to the sort of man I'd like to meet. Once I was young and pretty, Oh! and giddy too, you bet! but you learn, don't you? Yes, you learn far more than is good to know, but you have to know it or go down, don't you? If you was to ask whether it was worth while, I'd not take long to make up my mind—I know my answer, I do! And yet I can't help feeling a heartache now and then, for there's one proud thing I can say for him: he never deceived me; he was faithful to me and never once broke his marriage vows.'

'But how d'you know?' Eva Gospedal grimly asked.

'Oh, I know, I know. I'm certain sure of it. He didn't ever try; he didn't want to. And another about him, he was a lovely man for enjoying his food—great splashing mouths he made. But for ever getting something the matter with his insides, continual he was, and in the long run it come to be unbearable. Twenty years, you know's a long, long time. That's what I mean about some persons being unluckier than the next-door neighbours, which is true. Quite unbearable. The fear of death got hold of him and he could feel himself dying, so he said, day after day. I thought he really was going to die sometimes, but he didn't, not for years and years. Lord, the mountains he made out of his mumps! A grown man too! As God's my help I could never be such a namby, not if I was struck by lightning's flash. "Go on," I'd say to him when he was bad-tempered—and he was very often that way, peevish; they'd complain of Paradise, that sort—"Go on," I used to say, "you'll live as long's the most, I know you will," but he wouldn't have it. I only discouraged him, he said. And he didn't die, not till eighteen months ago when he was took poorly and went off in a flash.'

Had time but granted, Biddy Ashpole would have been talking for good and all, aye, for seven and seventy years! and her chatter was not unwelcome to the girl widow, who anyway was a lady, with the manners expected of such. She listened politely, sometimes smiling, while the other, the Gospedal woman, listened but never smiled. She blurted out to Biddy: 'So you didn't have much to grieve about.'

'Oh, but,' Biddy declared, 'a husband's a husband.'

'What do you want then? One man's just like another.'

'Oh no, no!' the young widow broke in vehemently.

'Like any other; not a differ at all.'

'Oh, but there is!'

'What? See one and you've seen the whole British Army!'

'Aye, aye!' Biddy acceded, for Biddy (the pity of it!) was pliable; 'Join the Army and see the World; they tell all the young'uns that nowadays.'

'And how you're to get on with them ever,' Mrs. Gospedal went on relentlessly, 'they don't tell you that, and you just can't. And they're so full of tricks and lies. Where are they? You're not supposed to know. Where've they been? You're not supposed to inquire.'

Young Mrs. Pryde glared inimically at the speaker, who continued: 'The best way to treat 'em is like the old wild woman in the tale; she carried her'n about with her wherever she went.'

'Carried! How?'

'On her back, tied up in a bag. He was only a bit of a gnome, the size of a doll, and when she'd a mind to do so, she'd let him out o' the bag a little while and play some games with him.'

'Oh, I say!'

'Well, that's what it says; just played with him.'

'Not much of a life,' Mrs. Ashpole opined.

Eva Gospedal went on: 'I never knew a thing; I only knew when my husband went out and when he came in; but in regard of the things he did or what he was ever up to . . . Foo! He was,' she declared rancorously, 'the most unfaithful man ever born, betrayed me time and time again with any common bitch—what would you have done with a husband like that?'

'Oh sakes!' said Biddy, 'perhaps, I don't know, but if my husband had been a little inclined that way . . . ?'

'Well, what? Tell me what you'd have done. Say it.'

Mrs. Ashpole mused: 'Of course, I suppose I would have left him there and then; I suppose that's what I would have done.'

Eva turned with strange fiery impatience to Mrs. Pryde: 'What would *you* have done?'

Instantly, with quiet passion, but burning indeed, the answer came: 'I'd have killed myself at once.'

'I killed *him*,' shouted Eva; 'that's what I did!'

Her sharp meaning plumped into their midst like a bolt, shattering credence, leaving them motionless, numb, until Mrs. Pryde broke the tension with a single word: 'How?'

'I *killed* him,' was the stolid reply; 'I killed him all right.'

'No, you didn't,' Biddy said. 'How can you say it; I don't believe it.'

The young widow asked: 'Weren't you found out?'

Shrugging her shoulders the elder woman said wryly: 'I'm here, ain't I? All the same, I killed him.'

'But how? But how?' was what the others were most eager to know. They asked repeatedly: 'How?'

'Oh, it was done, and I was never blamed for it. What's the curiosity? I did it well. Was I to let his way of life destroy mine and my life? No fear! Oh no! Here I am still—he's gone for good.'

Mrs. Gospedal paused, defiant. The others were silent, staring uneasily away from her. There was no clock in the room, but while the guilty one seemed to be pondering, you might have heard eternity ticking. She resumed with a hopeless sigh: 'But I shouldn't have done it; I was sorry soon. I shouldn't have, not to him. I've been sorry ever since; I'll always be sorry; I'll die of sorrow. What am I good for? No man, no child. Who looks at me now, the way he used to look at me once? O Christ! he could coax a throb out of a stone, though he'd throw it away just after. Who looks at me now? I shouldn't have done it, no matter what, I shouldn't. 'Tis not the sin I feel, don't think that! That never kept me awake, not the sin. It's the loss, for all the loss is my own, only mine; there's naught left in the world for me, nothing, nowhere now.'

So she ended, and whether her tale was finished or not, no one asked for more or spoke again until they heard the ploop-ploop and clatter of the train's approach.

'Here it is,' exclaimed the one.

'We must go,' the other said.

The Gospedal woman hunched the burden on her shoulders.

They left the room together, all three, as the train, with its half-dozen antiquated coaches empty and gloomy, rumbled to a standstill. The panting train hissed a little but nobody alighted. The three women filed irresolutely along the platform. Two of them entered a compartment together and closed the door; the other, with burden on back, passed further along to travel on alone.

THE PHEASANT HUNTER

WILLIAM SAROYAN

MAYO MALONEY at eleven was a little runt of a fellow who was not rude so much as he was rudeness itself, for he couldn't even step inside a church, for instance, without giving everybody who happened to see him an uncomfortable feeling that he, Mayo, despised the place and its purpose.

It was much the same everywhere else that Mayo went: school, library, theatre, home. Only his mother felt that Mayo was not a rude boy, but his father frequently asked Mayo to get down off his high horse and act like everybody else. By this, Michael Maloney meant that Mayo ought to take things easy and stop finding so much fault with everything.

The only thing that didn't bore him was the idea of hunting, but his father wouldn't buy him a gun, not even a ·22-calibre single-shot rifle. Michael Maloney told Mayo that as soon as he was sure that Mayo had calmed down a little, he would think about buying him a gun. Mayo tried to calm down a little, so he could have his gun, but he gave it up after a day and a half.

'O.K.,' his father said, 'if you don't want your gun, you don't have to try to earn it.'

'I did try to earn it,' Mayo said.

'When?'

'Yesterday and today'.

'I had in mind,' his father said, 'a trial covering a period of at least a month.'

'A month?' Mayo said. 'How do you expect a fellow to stay calm all through October with pheasant to shoot in the country?'

'I don't know how,' Mike Mayo said, 'but if you want a gun, you've got to calm down enough so I can believe you won't shoot the neighbours with it. Do you think my father so much as let me sit down to my dinner if I hadn't done something to earn it? He didn't invite me to earn any gun to shoot pheasant with. He told me to earn my food, and he didn't wait until I was eleven, either. I started earning it when I was no more than eight. The whole trouble with you is you're too pent-up from not doing any kind of work at all for your food or shelter or clothing to be decently tired and ordinary like everybody else. You're not human, almost. Nobody's human who doesn't know how hard it is to earn his food and the other basic things.

Mr. Maloney spoke as much to the boy's mother as to the boy himself, and he spoke as well to the boy's younger brother and younger sister, for he had left his office at half past four, as he did once a week, to sit down with the whole family for early supper, and it was his intention to make these mid-week gatherings at the table memorable to everyone, including himself.

'Now, Mike,' Mrs. Maloney said. 'Mayo's not as bad as all that. He just wants a gun to hunt pheasant with.'

Mike Mayo laid down his fork that was loaded with macaroni baked with tomatoes and cheese, and he stared at his wife a long time, rejecting one by one two dozen angry remarks he knew would do no one present any good at all to hear, and only make the gathering *unpleasantly* memorable.

At last he said, 'I suppose you think I ought to get him a gun, just like that?'

'Mayo isn't really rude or anything like that,' the boy's mother said. 'It's just that he's restless, the way every human being's got to be once in his lifetime for a while.'

Mayo didn't receive this defence of himself with anything like gratitude. If anything, it appeared as if he were sick and tired of having so much made of a simple little matter like furnishing him with an inexpensive ·22-calibre single-shot rifle.

'Now don't you go to work and try to speak up for him,' Mike Maloney said to his wife, 'because, as you can see for yourself, he doesn't like it. He doesn't enjoy being spoken up for, not even by his mother, poor woman, and you can see how much he thinks of what his father's saying this minute.'

'What did I say?' Mayo asked.

'You didn't say anything,' his father said. 'You didn't need to.' He turned to Mrs. Maloney. 'Is it a gun I must buy for him now?' he said.

Mrs. Maloney didn't quite know how to say that it was. She remained silent and tried not to look at either her husband or her son.

'O.K.,' Mike Maloney said to both his wife and his son. 'I have to go back to the office a minute, so if you'll come along with me I'll drop into Archie Cannon's and buy you a gun.'

He got up from the table and turned to Mrs. Maloney.

'Provided, of course,' he said, 'that that meets with your approval.'

'Aren't you going to finish your food?' Mrs. Maloney said.

'No, I'm not,' Mike Maloney said. 'And I'll tell you why, too. I don't want him to be denied anything he wants or anything his mother wants him to have, without earning it, for one unnecessary moment, and as you can see, his cap's on his head, he's at the door, and every moment I stand here explaining is unnecessary.'

'Couldn't you both finish your food first?' Mrs. Maloney said.

'Who wants to waste time eating,' Mike Maloney said, 'when it's time to buy a gun?'

'Well,' Mrs. Maloney said, 'perhaps you'll have something after you buy the gun.'

'We should have been poor,' Mike Maloney said. 'Being poor would have helped us in this problem.'

Mike Maloney went to the door where his nervous son was standing waiting for him to shut up and get going.

He turned to his wife and said, 'I won't be able to account for him after I turn the gun over to him, but I'll be gone no more than an hour. If we'd been poor and couldn't afford it, he'd know the sinfulness of provoking me into this sort of bitter kindness.'

When he stepped out of the house on to the front porch, he saw that his son was at the corner, trying his best not to run. He moved quickly and caught up with him, and he moved along as swiftly as his son did.

At last he said, 'Now, I'm willing to walk the half mile to Archie Cannon's, but I'm not going to run, so if you've got to run, go ahead, and I'll meet you outside the place as soon as I get there.'

He saw the boy break loose and disappear far down the street. When he got to Archie Cannon's, the boy was waiting for him. They went in and Mike Maloney asked Archie to show him the guns.

'What kind of a gun do you want, Mike?' Archie said. 'I didn't know you were interested in hunting.'

'It's not for myself,' Mike Maloney said. 'It's for Mayo here, and it ought to be suitable for pheasant shooting.'

'That would be a shotgun,' Archie said.

'Would that be what it would be?' Mike Maloney asked his son, and although the boy hadn't expected anything precisely suitable for pheasant shooting, he said that a shotgun would be what it would be.

'O.K., Archie,' Mike Maloney said, 'A shotgun'.

'Well, Mike,' Archie said, 'I wouldn't like to think a shotgun would be the proper gun to turn over to a boy.'

'Careful,' Mike Maloney said. 'He's right here with us, you know. Let's not take any unnecessary liberties. I believe he indicated the gun ought to be a shotgun.'

'Well, anyway,' Archie said, 'it's going to have a powerful kick.'

'A powerful kick,' Mike Maloney repeated, addressing the three words to his son, who received them with disdain.

'That is no matter to him,' Mike Maloney said to Archie Cannon.

'Well, then,' Archie Cannon said, 'this here's a fine double-barrel twelve-gauge shotgun and it's just about the best bargain in the store.'

'You shouldn't have said that, Archie,' Mike Maloney said. 'This man's not interested in bargains. What he wants is the best shotgun you've got that's suitable for pheasant shooting.'

'That would be this twelve-gauge repeater,' Archie Cannon said, 'that sells for ninety-eight fifty, plus tax of course. It's the best gun of its kind.'

'Anybody can see it's a better gun,' Mike Maloney said. 'No need to waste time with inferior firearms.'

He handed the gun to Mayo Maloney, who held it barrel down, resting over his right arm, precisely as a gun, loaded or not, ought to be held.

'I'll show you how it works,' Archie Cannon made the mistake of saying to Mayo Maloney. The boy glanced at Archie in a way that encouraged him to say quickly, 'Anything else, then? Fishing tackle, hooks, boxing gloves, rowing machines, tennis rackets?'

'Anything else?' Mike Maloney said to his son, who said nothing, but with such irritation that Mike quickly said to Archie Cannon, 'Shells, of course. What good is a shotgun without shells?'

Archie Cannon jumped to get three boxes of his best shotgun shells, and as he turned them over to Mike Maloney, who turned them over to Mayo, Archie said, 'A hunting coat in which to carry the shells? A red hunting cap?'

Mayo Maloney was gone, however.

'He didn't want those things,' Mike Maloney said.

'Some hunters go to a lot of trouble about costume,' Archie Cannon said.

'He doesn't,' Mike Maloney said. 'What do I owe you?'

'One hundred and five dollars and sixty-nine cents, including tax,' Archie said. 'Has he got a licence?'

'To hunt?' Mike Maloney said. 'He hasn't got a licence to eat, but damned if I don't halfway admire him sometimes. He must know something to be so sure of himself and so contemptuous of everybody else.'

'To tell you the truth,' Archie Cannon said, 'I thought you were kidding, Mike. I thought you were kidding the way you sometimes do in court when you're helping a small man fight a big company. I didn't expect you to actually buy a gun and turn it over to an eleven-year-old boy. Are you sure it's all right?'

'Of course it's all right,' Mike Maloney said. 'You saw for yourself the way he held the gun.' He began to write a cheque. 'Now, what did you say it came to?'

'A hundred and five sixty-nine,' Archie Cannon said. 'I hope you know there's no pheasant to speak of anywhere near here. The Sacramento Valley is where the pheasant shooting is.'

'Where you going to be around ten o'clock tonight?' Mike Maloney said.

'Home, most likely,' Archie Cannon said. 'Why?'

'Will you be up?'

'Oh, yes,' Archie said. 'I never get to bed before midnight. Why?'

'Would you like to drop over to my house for a couple of bottles of beer around ten?' Mike said.

'I'd like that very much,' Archie said. 'Why?'

'Well,' Mike said, 'the way I figure is this: It's a quarter after five now. It'll take him about three minutes to hitch a ride with somebody going out to Riverdale, which is about twenty-five miles from here. That would take an average driver forty or forty-five minutes to make, but he'll get the driver, whoever he is, or she is, for that matter, to make it in about half an hour or a little under. He'll do it by being excited, not by saying anything. He'll get the driver to go out of his or her way to let him off where the hunting is, too, so he'll start hunting right away, or a little before six. He'll hunt until after dark, walking a lot in the meantime. He won't get lost or anything like that, but he'll have to walk back to a road with a little traffic. He'll hitch a ride back, and he'll be home a little before or a little after ten.'

'How do you know?' Archie said. 'How do you even know he's going hunting at all tonight? He just got the gun and he may not even know how to work it.'

'You saw him take off, didn't you?' Mike Maloney said. 'He took off to go hunting. And you can be sure he either knows how to work the gun or will find out by himself in a few minutes.'

'Well,' Archie said, 'I certainly would like to drop by for some beer, Mike, if you're serious.'

'Of course I'm serious,' Mike said.

'I suppose you want to have somebody to share your amusement with when he gets back with nothing shot and his body all sore from the powerful kick of the gun,' Archie said.

'Yes,' Mike said. 'I want to have somebody to share my amusement with but not for those reasons. He may be a little sore from the powerful kick of the gun, but I think he'll come back with something.'

'I've never heard of anybody shooting any pheasant around Riverdale,' Archie said. 'There's a little duck shooting out there in season, and jack rabbits of course.'

'He said pheasants,' Mike Maloney said. 'Here's my cheque. Better make it a little before ten, just in case.'

'I thought you were only kidding about the gun,' Archie said. 'Are you sure you did the right thing? I mean, considering he's only eleven years old, hasn't got a hunting licence and the pheasant-shooting season doesn't open for almost a month?'

'That's one of the reasons I want you to come by for some beer,' Mike said.

'I don't get it,' Archie said.

'You're game warden of this area, aren't you?'

'I am.'

'O.K.,' Mike said. 'If it turns out that he's broken the law, I want you to know it.'

'Well,' Archie said, 'I wouldn't want to bother about a small boy shooting a few days out of season or without a licence.'

'I'll pay his fine', Mike Maloney said.

'I don't think he'll get anything,' Archie said, 'so of course there won't be any fine to be paid.'

'I'll see you a little before ten, then,' Mike Maloney said.

He spent a half hour at his office, then walked home slowly, to find the house quiet and peaceful, the kids in bed and his wife doing the dishes. He took the dish towel and began to dry and put the clean dishes into the cupboard.

'I bought him the best shotgun Archie Cannon had for pheasant shooting,' he said.

'I hope he didn't make you too angry,' Mrs. Maloney said.

'He did for awhile,' Mike said, 'but all of a sudden he didn't, if you know what I mean.'

'I don't know what you mean,' Mrs. Maloney said.

'I mean,' Mike said, 'it's all right not being poor.'

'What's being poor got to do with it?' Mrs. Maloney said.

'I mean it's all right, that's all,' Mike said.

'Well, that's fine,' Mrs. Maloney said. 'But where is he?'

'Hunting, of course,' Mike said. 'You don't think he wanted a gun to look at.'

'I don't know what I think now,' Mrs. Maloney said. 'You've had so much trouble with him all along, and now all of a sudden you buy him an expensive gun and believe it's perfectly all right for him to go off hunting in the middle of the night on the third day of October. Why?'

'Well,' Mike Maloney said, 'it's because while I was preaching to him at the table something began to happen. It was as if my own father were preaching to me thirty years ago when I was Mayo's age. Oh, I did earn my food, as I said, and I wanted a gun, too, just as he's been wanting one. Well, my father preached to me, and I didn't get the gun. I mean, I didn't get it until almost five years later, when it didn't mean very much to me any more. Well, while I was preaching to him this afternoon, I remembered that when my father preached to me I was sure he was mistaken to belittle me so, and I even believed that somehow—somehow or other, perhaps because we were so poor, if that makes sense—he would suddenly stop preaching and take me along without any fuss of any kind and buy me a gun. But of course he didn't. And I *remembered* that he didn't, and I decided that perhaps I'd do for my son what my father had not done for me, if you know what I mean.'

'Do you mean you and Mayo are alike?' Mrs. Maloney said.

'I do,' Mike said. 'I do indeed.'

'Very much alike?'

'Almost precisely,' Mike said. 'Oh, he'll not be the great man he is now for long, and I don't want to be the one to cheat him out of a single moment of his greatness.'

'You must be joking,' Mrs. Maloney said.

'I couldn't be more serious,' Mike said. 'Archie Cannon thought I was joking, too, but why would I be joking? I bought him the gun and shells, and off he went to hunt, didn't he?'

'Well, I hope he doesn't hurt himself,' Mrs. Maloney said.

'We'll never know if he does,' Mike said. 'I've asked Archie to come by around ten for some beer because I figure he'll be back by then.'

'Is Mrs. Cannon coming with Archie?'

'I don't think so,' Mike said. 'Her name wasn't mentioned.'

'Then I suppose you don't want me to sit up with you,' Mrs. Maloney said.

'I don't know why not, if you want to,' Mike said.

But Mrs. Maloney knew it wouldn't do to sit up, so she said, 'No, I'll be getting to bed long before ten.'

Mike Maloney went out on the front porch with his wife, and they sat and talked about their son Mayo and their other kids until a little after nine, and then Mrs. Maloney went inside to see if the beer was in the ice box and to put some stuff out on the kitchen table, to go with the beer. Then she went to bed.

Around a quarter to ten Archie Cannon came walking up the street and sat down in the rocker on the front porch.

'I've been thinking about what you did,' he said, 'and I still don't know if you did right.'

'I did right all right,' Mike Maloney said. 'Let's go inside and have some beer. He'll be along pretty soon.'

They went inside and sat down at the kitchen table. Mike lifted the caps off two bottles of cold beer, filled two tall glasses, and they began to drink. There was a plate loaded with cold roast beef, ham, Bologna and sliced store cheese, and another plate with rye bread on it, already buttered.

When it was almost twelve and Mayo Maloney hadn't come home, Archie Cannon wondered if he shouldn't offer to get up and go home or maybe even offer to get his car and go looking for the boy, but he decided he'd better not. Mike Maloney seemed excited and angry at himself for having done such a foolish thing, and he might not like Archie to rub it in. They had stopped talking about Mayo Maloney around eleven, and Archie knew Mike wanted the situation to remain that way indefinitely.

A little before one in the morning, after they had finished a half dozen bottles of beer apiece and all the food Mrs. Maloney had set out for them, and talked about everything in the world excepting Mayo Maloney, they heard footsteps on the back stairs, and then on the porch, and after a moment he came into the kitchen.

He was a tired man. His face was dirty and flushed, and his clothes were dusty and covered with prickly burs of several kinds. His hands were scratched and almost black with dirt. His gun was slung over his right arm, and nested in his left arm were two beautiful pheasants.

He set the birds on the kitchen table, and then broke his gun up for cleaning. He wrapped a dry dish towel around the pieces and put the bundle in the drawer in which he kept his junk. He then brought six unused shells out of his pockets and placed them in the drawer, too, locked the drawer with his key and put the key back into his pocket. Then he went to the kitchen sink and rolled up his sleeves and washed his hands and arms and face and neck, and after he'd dried himself, he looked into the refrigerator and brought out some Bologna wrapped in butcher paper, and began to eat it without bread while he fetched bread and butter and a chair. He sat down and began to put three thick slices of Bologna between two slices of buttered bread. Mike Maloney had never before seen him eat so heartily.

He didn't look restless and mean any more, either.

Mike Maloney got up with Archie Cannon, and they left the house by the back door in order not to disturb Mrs. Maloney and the sleeping kids.

When they were in the back yard, Archie Cannon said, 'Well, aren't you going to ask him where he got them?'

'He's not ready to talk about it just yet,' Mike said. 'What's the fine?'

'Well,' Archie said, 'there won't be any fine because there's not supposed to be any pheasants in the whole area of which I'm game warden. I didn't believe he'd get anything, let alone pheasants, and both of them cocks, too. Damned if I don't admire him a little myself.'

'I'll walk you home,' Mike said.

In the kitchen, the boy finished his sandwich, drank a glass of milk and rubbed his shoulder.

The whole evening and night had been unbelievable. Suddenly at the table, when his father had been preaching to him, he'd begun to understand his father a little better, and himself, too, but he'd known he couldn't immediately stop being the way he had been for so long, the way that was making everybody so uncomfortable. He'd known he'd have to go on for a while longer and see the thing through. He'd have to go along with his father. He'd known all this very clearly, because his father had suddenly stopped being a certain way—the way everybody believed a father ought to be—and Mayo had known it was going to be necessary for him to stop being a certain way, too—the way he had believed he had to be. But he'd known he couldn't stop until he had seen the thing through.

In the kitchen, almost asleep from weariness, he decided he'd tell his father exactly what he'd done, but he'd wait a while first, maybe ten years.

He'd had a devil of a time finding out how the gun worked, and he hadn't been able to hitch a ride at all, so he'd walked and run six miles to the

countryside around Clovis, and there he'd loaded the gun and aimed it at a blackbird in a tree leaning over Clovis Creek, and pressed the trigger.

The kick had knocked him down and he had missed the bird by a mile. He'd had to walk a long way through tall dry grass and shrubs for something else to shoot at, but all it was was another blackbird, and again the kick had knocked him down and he'd missed it by a mile.

It was getting dark fast by then and there didn't seem to be anything alive around at all, so he began to shoot the gun just to get used to it. Pretty soon he could shoot it and not get knocked down. He kept shooting and walking, and finally it was dark and it seemed he was lost.

'Please don't let me make a fool of myself,' he prayed. 'Please let me start walking in the right direction on this road.'

He started walking down the road, hoping he was getting nearer home, or at least to a house with a light in it, or a store or something that would be open. He felt a lot of alive things in the dark that he knew must be imaginary, and he said, 'Please don't let me get so scared.' And pretty soon he felt so tired and small and lost and hopeless and foolish that he could barely keep from crying, and he said, 'Please don't let me cry.'

He walked a long time, and then far down the road he saw a small light, and he began to walk faster. It was a country store with a gasoline pump out front and a new pick-up truck beside the pump. Inside the store was the driver of the truck and the storekeeper, and he saw that it was twenty minutes to twelve. The storekeeper was an old man with a thick white moustache who was sitting on a box talking to the driver of the truck, who was about as old as the boy's father.

He saw the younger man wink at the older one, and he thanked God for both of them, and for the wink, because he didn't think people who could wink could be unfriendly.

He told them exactly what he had done, and why, and the men looked at him and at each other until he was all through talking. They both examined the brand-new gun, too. Then the storekeeper handed the gun back to the boy and said to the younger man, 'I'll be much obliged to you, Ed, if you'll get this man home in our truck.'

They were a father and a son, too, apparently, and good friends, besides. Mayo Maloney admired them very much, and on account of them, he began to like people in general, too.

'Not at all,' the younger man said.

'And I'd like to think we might rustle up a couple of pheasant for him to take home, too.'

'That might not be easy to do this hour of the night,' the younger man said, 'but we could try.'

'Isn't there an all-night Chinese restaurant in town that serves pheasant in and out of season?' the old man said. 'Commercial pheasant, that is?'

'I don't know,' the younger man said, 'but we could phone and find out.'

'No,' the older man said. 'No use phoning. They wouldn't be apt to understand what we were talking about. Better just drive up to it and go in and find out. It's on Kern Street between F and G, but I forget the name. Anyhow, it's open all night, and I've heard you can get pheasant there any time you like.'

'It certainly is worth looking into,' the younger man said.

The younger man got up, and Mayo Maloney, speechless with amazement got up, too. He tried to say something courteous to the older man, but nothing seemed to want to come out of his dry mouth. He picked up his gun and went out to the truck and got in beside the younger man, and they went off.

The younger man drove all the way to town in silence, and when the boy saw familiar places, he thought in prayer again, saying, *I certainly don't deserve this, and I'm never going to forget it.*

The truck crossed the Southern Pacific tracks to Chinatown, and the driver parked in front of Willie Fong's, which was, in fact, open, although nobody was inside eating. The driver stepped out of the truck and went into the restaurant, and the boy saw him talking to a waiter. The waiter disappeared and soon came back with a man in a business suit. This man and the driver of the truck talked a few minutes, and then they both disappeared into the back of the restaurant, and after a few minutes the driver of the truck came back, and he was holding something that was wrapped in newspaper. He came out of the restaurant and got back into the truck, and they drove off again.

'How's your father?' the man said suddenly.

'He's fine,' Mayo managed to say.

'I mean,' the man said, 'you *are* Mike Maloney's boy, aren't you?'

'Yes, I am,' Mayo Maloney said.

'I thought you were,' the man said. 'You look alike and have a lot in common. You don't have to tell me where you live. I know where it is. And I know you want to know who I am, but don't you think it would be better if I didn't tell you? I've had dealings with your father, and he lent me some money when I needed it badly and we both weren't sure I'd ever be able to pay him back. So it's all right. I mean, nobody's going to know anything about this from me.'

'Did they have any pheasants?' the boy said.

'Oh yes,' the man said. 'I'm sorry I forgot to tell you. They're in that newspaper. Just throw the paper out of the window.'

The boy removed the paper from around the birds and looked at them. They were just about the most wonderful-looking things in the whole world.

'Do they have any shot in them?' he asked. 'Because they ought to.'

'No, I'm afraid they don't,' the driver said, 'but we'll drive out here a little where it's quiet and we won't disturb too many sleeping farmers, and between the two of us we'll get some shot into them. You can do the shooting, if you like.'

'I might spoil them,' the boy said.

'I'll be glad to attend to it, then,' the driver said.

They drove along in silence a few minutes, and then the truck turned into a lonely road and stopped. The driver got out and placed the two birds on some grass by the side of the road in the light of the truck's lights about twenty yards off. Then he took the gun, examined it, aimed, fired once, unloaded the gun, fetched the birds, got back into the truck and they drove off again.

'They're just right now,' he said.

'Thanks,' the boy said.

When the truck got into his neighbourhood Mayo said, 'Could I get off a couple of blocks from my house, so nobody will see this truck accidentally?'

'Yes, that's a good idea,' the driver said.

The truck stopped. The boy carefully nested the two birds in his left arm, then got out, and the driver helped him get the gun slung over his right arm.

'I never expected anything like this to heppen,' the boy said.

'No, I suppose not,' the man said. 'I never expected to find a man like your father when I needed him, either, but I guess things like that happen just the same. Well, good night.'

'Good-night,' the boy said.

The man got into the truck and drove off, and the boy hurried home and into the house.

When Mike Maloney got back from walking Archie Cannon home, he was surprised to find the boy asleep on his folded arms on the kitchen table. He shook the boy gently, and Mayo Maloney sat up with a start, his eyes bloodshot and his ears red.

'You better get to bed,' Mike said.

'I didn't want to go,' the boy said, 'until you got back, so I could thank you for the gun.'

'That wasn't necessary,' the man said. 'That wasn't necessary at all.'

The boy got up and barely managed to drag himself out of the room without falling.

Alone in the kitchen, the father picked up the birds and examined them, smiling because he knew whatever was behind their presence in the house, it was certainly something as handsome as the birds themselves.

2

NEW BOOKS

DEFENCE OF THE WEST

By B. H. Liddell Hart. *Cassell.* 12s. 6d.

Next time there can be no liberation of Europe, because next time, if there is a next time, there will be nothing to liberate. A country does not recover from a Russian occupation and evacuation. These facts must be the basis of all military theory today. The next war, if there is one, can only be against Russia. Nobody in Europe is going to attack Russia, and the Russians must know it. There are three ways in which a world war might start—a direct clash between Russia and America, which is most likely to occur in the Pacific; a preliminary contest between the 'seconds', such as North and South Korea, with the principals joining in later; and thirdly, a Russian attack on Western Europe. Even if the war, if there is one, does not start with a Russian attack on Western Europe, that will inevitably follow, so, as far as we are concerned, there is little to choose between the three ways. It is no comfort to Europeans to assume that America could in time throw her vast productive power against Russia. For us the decisive battles will be fought a few days after the attack is launched in Europe. Next time, if there is a next time, there can be no withdrawal to the Pyrenees or across the Channel.

If Russia attacked Europe today, what would happen? Captain Liddell Hart is frankly gloomy. The Russian army is far stronger than any force available to oppose it in Europe. The British and Americans have only small contingents left there; the armies of the liberated countries are only half-formed, and in particular, the best of the French troops are engaged in Indo-China; the German army has disappeared. 'The advance of a Russian Army is something that Westerners can't imagine. Behind the tank spearhead rolls on a mass of troops, largely mounted on horses. The soldier carries a sack on his back with dry bread and vegetables collected from the fields and villages. The horses eat straw from the thatched roofs—they get very little else. The Russians are accustomed to carry on for as long as three weeks in this way. You can't stop them like an ordinary army by cutting their communications for you rarely find any supply columns to strike.' This was General von Manteuffel's experience in the last war, and though Captain Liddell Hart has for years denounced our habit of fighting a war on the experiences of the previous one, he considers this to be an accurate description of what the defenders of Western Europe will, or may, have to face. You cannot stop such an army by bombing it: the Americans could not even stop the North Koreans that way. It would be optimistic to assume that atom bombs could do it. America's stock of them is limited, and at present they are not a tactical weapon suitable for use against land forces, especially forces so fluid as the Russian. The prospect of atom bombs dropping on Moscow or Leningrad might be a deterrent to decision for war, but once the war started, it would hardly be decisive of the issue in time to save Western Europe. The conclusion is unpleasant but ineluctable, and Captain Liddell Hart will have done a great service to his country if his book helps to drive it home to the people of this country. Troops on the ground can only be stopped by other troops on the ground. Once again, Korea has shown us that.

Fortunately, mere numbers of men have never been decisive in war, and we are not faced with the impossible task of matching the Russians division for division regardless of quality. What we need, according to Captain Liddell Hart, is a highly mobile land force powerful enough to check the Russian spearheads. Having determined the size of this force, the rest of our defensive effort should be concentrated on the air force. Captain Liddell Hart suggests as a minimum twenty fully-trained, modernly-equipped divisions, ready for action on the spot like a fire brigade. This seems a low estimate. Thirty divisions

is normally considered the lowest realistic estimate.

But criticism of Captain Liddell Hart's estimates only strengthens his case for a complete overhaul of the British armed forces. Britain is maintaining nearly 800,000 men under arms at a cost, for 1949–50, of at least £760,000,000. Out of that we ought surely to be able to provide ten divisions for the defence of Europe, but we do not, or anything like it, because, says Captain Liddell Hart, we are wasting our men and our money. The first and most essential step is to scrap conscription. In a short, incisive, and to me convincing, chapter, he demolishes the arguments for conscription.

Conscription has certain apparent advantages, all likely to appeal to those who now rule us. It is administratively neat, which is a boon to planners. The men must come when and as they are called. It is cheap in proportion to the numbers enrolled. Skilled and intelligent men can be obtained at unskilled rates of pay. It appears to be 'democratic' and egalitarian; cook's son, duke's son, son of a belted earl must all serve their term. But, in fact, conscription destroys efficiency. It fosters the delusion of safety in numbers, at a time when more than ever before, victory or defeat depends on the quality of weapons and, above all, the quality of the man behind them.

What we need is a professional army of about 250,000 men, who will be soldiers, not nursemaids and housekeepers for young conscripts. Such a force could provide nine divisions at the ready. To get the professionals, we must pay them properly and treat them properly, a perfectly obvious proposition which is strangely unwelcome to politicians. In a letter to *The Times*, Brigadier Anthony Head, a distinguished soldier and a recent politician wrote that: 'Almost all the action required to provide and train sufficient men is economically inconvenient and politically unpopular.' The abolition of conscription would be neither. Captain Liddell Hart maintains that it would actually save money, but even if it did not, it is the only way to give us the defence which we must have, and which the present system is singularly failing to provide.

KAKEMONO

By Honor Tracy. *Methuen.* 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by O. M. Green

Miss Tracy spent the year 1948 in Japan as special correspondent of the *Observer*, by which time the efforts of the Americans to re-make Japan by the rules of 'de-mok-ra-sie' were in full swing, while the Japanese, having largely recovered from the stupefaction caused by defeat, were divided between anxiety to please the conquerors, silent resentment, and bewilderment as to what was really expected of them.

'At times,' Miss Tracy says, 'it looked as if the Japanese nation was, by one of those mysterious, unspoken Japanese agreements, taking part in a gigantic hoax. At others, they seemed like a troupe of clever animals in a circus that obediently go through the motions requested of them with never an inkling as to why they should. What I was never conscious of . . . was any real desire for the new way of living or belief that it was the solution of the country's problems.'

That very little of the American pattern of life will survive the Americans' departure is certain. Miss Tracy, however, scoffs at the fears of some that Communism (numbering at most 100,000 party members) will take its place. For her, the chief cause of anxiety lies in the unpredictable result of the Japanese devotion for the Emperor and their silent anger at the various humiliations put upon him.

Miss Tracy has a brilliant gift for description, effortless, beautifully revealing and never overdone. One has never read better descriptions of a geisha dance, of the glorious flowering of cherry trees and its magical influence on the Japanese people (oddly, though, she seems to have missed the no less lovely maples, ginkos and persimmon trees of autumn), of the (for foreigners) agonisingly long-drawn *Noh* plays, the touching atmosphere of the Yasakuni Shrine devoted to the memory of fallen soldiers, and of the country life still unaltered by foreign reform. In some things Miss Tracy cannot help laughing at the Japanese, and she is not blind to their worser side. The brutality of the Eta ghetto at Kyoto is as horrible as anything that the

treatment of India's untouchables can show. And it is sad that Kyoto's matchless craftsmen in lacquer, cloisonne, damascene and other exquisite arts should stoop to produce Brummagem wares which attract the G.I.s. But she says truly that 'there is nothing so restful as the company of Japanese', with their beautiful manners, respect for others and 'suppression of all personal emotions and impatiences'.

The book would have been strengthened by a chapter on the recovery of Japanese industry, even in 1948 already remarkable, and by now, in some things, approaching pre-war levels. What one does not like is Miss Tracy's unalloyed disparagement of the Americans. No doubt the most tactless and overbearing element among them was always the most conspicuous. But Miss Tracy seems to ignore America's boundless generosity to Japan and that the occupation, despite some natural errors, has enabled the Japanese to get on their feet again better than any other conquered (and some conquering) nations have done. Japan was singularly lucky to fall into America's hands.

THE MEANING OF BEAUTY

By Eric Newton. *Longmans.* 15s.

Reviewed by P. M. Fitzgerald

Mr. Newton's text is Veronese's mystical 'Marriage of St. Catherine' (it is a great pity it could not have been reproduced in colour)—a picture which is like the rose or the apricot in its obvious, adorable, slightly overblown beauty. From this beginning he sets out on his tormenting quest.

His argument is that beauty in Nature is 'God's geometry' (a charming old-fashioned phrase), that is, the product of mathematical behaviour which in turn is the product of function. Beauty in art, on the other hand, is a product of man's love, or understanding, of the mathematical function of Nature.

With the grim persistence of Hazlitt, Mr. Newton batters away at the next problem. There is beauty at many levels, he shows, in a work of art, and 'true to

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As readers of *Andean Adventure* know, Miss Linke has an eye for the unusual and a gifted pen to record it. These qualities are strikingly evident in *Magic Yucatan.* With 34 illustrations. 12s. 6d. net.

published by Hutchinson

lifeness' is the most superficial. Then comes the artist's feeling for his subject and his feeling for the world he lives in, and in the innermost secret room of all is the mystery which disconcertingly turns out to be an affair of canvas, brushes and turpentine. Armed with his new definitions, Mr. Newton begins the analysis of the St. Catherine and of other pictures, and here, like everyone else who has tried to write about aesthetics, he comes to grips with 'associations'. In a striking image he asks me what I should feel if I admired a field of buttercups from a distance, and coming nearer found the yellow patches were torn-up packets of Gold Flake. I cannot deny that I should be disappointed. And 'associations' go very deep down indeed into the meaning of beauty. They are, in fact, to some extent the villains of the piece, for they prevent the 'average man' from welcoming modern art. Distortion and non-descriptive painting seem to him ugly because he has been brought up in the lingering twilight of the Renaissance with all its adoration of the human form; but Mr. Newton reminds him that 'wherever and whenever man has regarded his gods as all powerful, and life as a mystery beyond his control, art has not been humanistic and human beauty has not been the standard.' The remedy, then, for the 'average man' is to get rid of his associations at the double.

You notice that I say 'his' and not 'my', for I do not much care to be identified with this average man. He receives but cold comfort, and I wish Mr. Newton had taken as much trouble over defining him as he does over other matters. He is rancorous towards him, and I hear again the growl of the wounded critic on the cold upper slopes, which sounds in so many books on modern art.

But *The Meaning of Beauty* is a sincere and admirable book. Mr. Newton goes in fighting against so many difficult points. He tackles the question of taste, and good taste, and familiarity, and the influence of photography, and form and content. It has the exhilaration of close in-fighting. And all the time the 'Marriage of St. Catherine' remains with its glow of rose and olive green and peacock green, sumptuous, idiotic, and beautiful.

THE YOUNG LAG

By Sir Leo Page. *Faber & Faber.* 18s.

Reviewed by Frederick Lawton

Sir Leo Page does not subscribe to the theory, which is very popular amongst criminals, that crime is a manifestation of mental abnormality and should be treated as such. He says of the psychiatrists who take this view of crime that they are most mischievous, not only because they give advice which in individual cases is wholly mistaken and misleading, but because they teach principles which, if followed, will lead reformers away from methods which are far simpler but more effective. Sir Leo's views on these psychiatrists are shared by most judges and barristers practising in the criminal courts. Is distrust of psychiatrists justified? Or is it founded on prejudice? The evidence either way should be available to the public, who have to pay, both directly and indirectly, for the psychiatric services which the Home Office and the Service Departments provide. Most of the evidence against psychiatrists comes from the claims and explanations which the more irresponsible amongst them put forward in the witness-box. Sir Leo gives, amongst many examples, that of the psychiatrist who was giving evidence at an Assize Court on behalf of a young man aged twenty-four who had been convicted of writing disgusting anonymous letters for more than a year to women in the country town in which he lived. He attributed the prisoner's actions to the fact that he was suffering from diseased tonsils; in place of punishment, he recommended removal of the tonsils.

In his last chapter Sir Leo has a tilt at magistrates and judges who sentence young offenders to short terms of imprisonment for serious offences. In his view, no good purpose is served by sending a young man to prison for so short a term as to be almost useless as a deterrent and wholly useless as an opportunity for training. These views will find general acceptance amongst prison officials and police officers. Some prison governors are of the opinion that if a crime requires to be punished by imprisonment at all, the term should not be

less than twelve months, that period being the minimum required for effective training. It does not follow, however, that because short sentences probably do more harm than good, long sentences are good in themselves. The most unpleasant part of a prison sentence is usually its beginning. Within a few months the habit of prison life is acquired. The prisoner finds that controlled institutional life has its attractions and advantages: there are no economic problems to solve, no social responsibilities to bear—there is nothing to do but live. When the long sentence does come to an end, a half-trained social animal rather than a man may leave the prison.

Sir Leo's comments about short sentences are based, as are so many discussions about penal reform, upon the assumption that punishment according to law must connote a sentence of imprisonment. It is often forgotten that the present-day conceptions of imprisonment as a form of punishment are largely an invention of the nineteenth century. Up to the end of the eighteenth century prisons were primarily places of confinement for those awaiting trial and execution. The assize judge's commission charged him with the duty of making 'general gaol delivery', that is, with trying all persons found in the county gaol. The sentences most usually passed on conviction were sentences of death, transportation, whipping, forfeiture of goods and standing in the pillory. When death and transportation ceased to be appropriate sentences on conviction for felonies other than murder, some other form of punishment had to be found: cellular confinement in 'model' prisons such as Pentonville are substituted for the more physical punishments.

The 'model' prisons which were built in most county towns in the middle of the nineteenth century are no longer suitable for penal purposes. They were designed to be a terror to evil-doers. The Reverend Sydney Smith advised that there should be no sharing of profits, no visiting friends, no education but religious education, no weavers' looms or carpenters' benches; in fact, nothing except a great deal of solitude and facilities for hard, incessant, irksome, eternal labour. His advice seems to have been taken. Since the turn of the century, everything that Sydney Smith advised against has been introduced into prisons—but the accommodation for it has had to be carved out of the facilities which he advised should be available for solitude and irksome toil. So long as money and building materials are scarce, new prisons cannot be built.

As a subject for discussion, prison reform is very much like Communism: it conjures up prejudices and smothers truth. Prejudices find no place in Sir Leo Page's book.

THE PROPER STUDY OF MANKIND

By Stuart Chase. *Phoenix Press.* 16s.

Reviewed by C. E. M. Joad

This book is presented to the British Public with inflated claims and influential backing. We hear of Mr. Stuart Chase's 'ability to enter a new intellectual terrain'; of 'this brilliant survey of the various social sciences'; of 'what may well prove to be one of the most influential books of the decade'. 'It ought,' says David Lilienthal, ex-Chairman of the United States Atomic Energy Commission, 'to be read by every responsible citizen.'

Mr. Chase starts from two theses. The first is that the physical sciences have enormously outstripped the social sciences, those, namely, which are concerned with man; secondly, that the time has come when this gulf can, and must, be closed, since the social sciences can now 'pronounce with confidence on the fundamentals of human nature.' Hence to extend and apply the social sciences in the right way is to put ourselves in a position to improve human nature; more particularly, we shall be able to alleviate, if not to solve, such perennial human problems and difficulties as—to quote from the jacket—'race prejudice, labour-management relations, education, communication, unemployment and the overwhelming problem of peace and war'. Julian Huxley, who ought to know better, takes the same

line. 'Mr. Chase,' he says in a special wrapper, 'makes us realise that social science is the only way in which man can hope to proceed from the conquest of nature to the rational control of himself.'

Throughout the book the hit-and-miss methods of the pre-social science era are contrasted with the precision, the comprehensiveness and the certainty of the information which the social sciences provide, the implication being that we have only to increase the knowledge gained in this way to introduce the millennium.

The fallacy that the material with which the social sciences deal, namely, human nature, is relevantly of the same kind, can be treated, therefore, successfully by the same methods and is capable, when so treated, of yielding the same kind of results as the material of the physical sciences, runs through the book. Mr. Chase cites examples from flying and from medicine. He draws attention to the success with which techniques were devised during the war for picking out young men who are likely to make good flyers. Medicine again, he says, 'tries to understand in order to cure', the implication being that science is as useful in the human sphere as in any other. But these analogies are misleading.

While airmen and doctors are certain of their ends, we do not know what kind of men we want to produce or how we are to produce them; or, rather, in so far as it may be truly asserted that we do know, it is not social science which has enlightened us. For consider: either the qualities which we desire to produce are those which Christianity has historically commended —justice, mercy, pity, love, compassion— or they are not. If they are, it is to religion that we must look to make men better. If they are not, what are they? Presumably some other set of qualities—greater resolution, determination and capacity, perhaps; or greater will to acquire and greater skill in exercising power. But the question immediately suggests itself, why should we want such people? Have they on the whole either led to an increase of happiness or of virtue? On the whole, the answer is that they have not. Yet if not these, then what *other* set of qualities would Mr. Chase's social scientists produce and promote? No answer is given.

COLLECTED IMPRESSIONS

By Elizabeth Bowen. *Longmans.* 16s.

Reviewed by Arthur Calder-Marshall

This book is divided into six sections: Prefaces; Reviews; Two Pieces; Plays, Pictures, Places; A Broadcast; Two Pieces from *Orion.*

It is interesting that, whereas when one reads reviewers like Miss Bowen in the *New Statesman*, irritation at being unable to discover whether the book reviewed is worth reading blunts the appreciation of the clever survey of the subject ('How much', one asks, 'is this the critic's gloss on information supplied by the writer of the book; how much the informed polymath gently chiding in 800 words a simpleton foolish enough to write a hundred times that number about a subject he doesn't understand?'), now when the reviews are republished and the books comfortingly out of print, it is the general discourse which is important.

The collection of old reviews, in this respect, is like the collection of matchboxes or used stamps. Their servile function finished, they begin on manumission a new career.

To read Miss Bowen's prose, even when occasional, is an invigorating exercise. No one, practising today, is more adroit with adjectives; she may use the rapid volley, the unexpected lob or the backhand, but unerringly she gains her point.

With unfeigned humility she suggests that the reader will find his main interest in the subjects treated. I believe that many more will be more interested, as I am, in the light that these critical articles throw on Miss Bowen's creative work. Her Anglo-Irish background has developed her sense of places acutely. She delineates them as fast and surely as a lightning cartoonist; and yet where there *is* a conflict, she catches it without sacrificing her confident line.

Past time is like another place to her. The Six Daughters of George III are sketched from bassinette to burial in a thousand words as vividly as London in the blitz or 'the Big House' in Ireland.

THE CASE OF THE GREEK CHILDREN

Captive Children—The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs.

The Case of the Kidnapped Greek Children—Royal Greek Embassy Information Service.

There are 28,000 Greek children scattered in camps over Eastern Europe. The United Nations Balkan Commission has given the approximate figures of children in each country.

Yugoslavia	12,000
Albania	3,000
Bulgaria	3,000
Hungary	3,000
Roumania	4,000
Czechoslovakia	2,000
Poland	500

No one disputes these figures, and after five years' experience of the 'new democracies' it is surprising that there is even that much common ground between them and the rest of the world. 28,000 is a small figure compared to the odd million German prisoners-of-war whom the Russians now say never existed.

If you accept the Communist explanations, there is no need to worry. In February 1946, Albania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Roumania broadcast an offer of hospitality to 60,000 Greek children 'to educate them in free countries.' Since that time, the parents of 28,000 children have taken advantage of this offer and sent their children to safety. In July 1948 the Albanian Government told the Secretary-General of the United Nations that there were no Greek children in Albania who had been removed by force and that the retention of the children was 'a humanitarian act entirely in keeping with the principles of all civilised and peace-loving nations', for whom, presumably, Albania was the spokesman as no other country concerned replied to the appeals of the United Nations. The Hungarian Red Cross, however, at the end of 1949, informed the Secretary-General that 'until there is an improvement in the situation in Greece, where there exists a serious refugee problem, they cannot agree to send back to Greece the Greek children now living in Hungary.' Mr. Trygve Lie ended a statement on 6 January 1950 with the words: 'I am very much worried by the whole question of Greek children and hope we can reach a solution soon.'

Another account has been given by the Greek Government and accepted by the Commission of the Churches. 'By the hateful and deliberate practice of the Communist forces, many thousands of Greek children have been abducted from their homes, their villages and their country to an unknown fate.' In October 1947 the United Nations set up a Special Committee on the Balkans to investigate complaints by the Greek Government. This Committee declared that the guerrillas were systematically collecting children and transferring them across the border, in some cases with the consent of the parents at the time, but in the great majority of cases by force. One quotation from the Committee's report is enough to show the system—"April '48: witness said guerrillas came to Dhipotania to collect children. Two families consented; 22 forcibly abducted despite parents' protests. Crossed border into Albania near Komninadkes." The General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution that the children be returned to their homes immediately. A year later, in November last, the General Assembly passed another resolution 'noting that the Greek children have not yet been returned to their homes in accordance with the resolution of the General Assembly.'

But some of the children have been returned to Greece. The U.N. Special Committee reported to the Fourth Session of the General Assembly—'In March 1949, the Special Committee began to receive reports of the presence of Greek

children in the combat units of the guerrillas. These children, who for the most part had been removed from their homes in Greece by the guerrillas in 1948 and taken to Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, allegedly for humanitarian reasons, have been compelled to return to fight. Since March 1949 the Special Committee has received overwhelming evidence that the Greek guerrilla movement is using children down to fourteen years of age, both boys and girls, in the fighting groups.' These young janissaries, captured by the Greek Army, are, so far, the only children reunited with their parents.

In the brutish history of the Balkans there has been nothing beastlier than this case of the Greek children. There was no long-term planning behind the sporadic atrocities of the Ottoman Turks. It is a part of that passionate effort described by the Religious Bodies' Consultative Committee—a passionate effort to destroy the institutions of European civilisation and to set in their place a new world order, wholly materialistic in conception, denying the spiritual nature of man, despising absolute morality and relying on violence alone for its complete justification. So far violence has held the Greek children, as it took them. 'World public opinion remains our last refuge,' says the Archbishop of Athens.

The Commission of the Churches can only urge all Christians to pray and 'to speak out'. The Greek Government has spoken out; the United Nations has spoken out. Mr. Ernest Bevin has described the case as one of the greatest scandals of our time. But the Greek children remain where they are, being trained for 'the liberation of their country from the monarcho-fascists and western imperialism'. But we can do more than 'speak out'. When the Government next proposes to negotiate a trade agreement with Tito, it might remember that there are 11,980 Greek children in Yugoslavia—11,980, because on 28 June the Lord Chancellor told the House of Lords that about 20 children had recently been allowed to leave Yugoslavia to join their parents who were now in Australia. The parents of the others are only a few miles away.

Shorter Notices

PORTRAIT PAINTERS

Edited by Alan Gwynne-Jones. *Phoenix House.* 32s. 6d.

A sumptuous volume tracing the development of portrait painting from the encaustic work on Graeco-Roman coffin lids to the beginning of the twentieth century. Mr. Gwynne-Jones has very marked opinions, and, like most modern critics, raises the appreciation of art to the status of morals, speaking, for instance, of the 'shocking truth' that people like the 'Mona Lisa' for the wrong reasons. Nor will he play for popularity by telling us anything about the sitters in this long gallery of dark or glowing faces from the past. But his enthusiasm and sincerity are beyond all praise, his notes on technique are helpful, and the reproductions are of fine quality.

ENGLISH POETRY

A Critical Introduction

By F. W. Bateson. *Longmans.* 10s. 6d.

A hard-hitting essay in the critical manner of Empson—the main argument is that the subject of poetry is 'human nature in its social relations' and that poetic schools follow the ups and downs of the ruling classes through English history. The first part of the essay, which hammers away at the problem of 'meaning' in poetry is by far the best. It is rather damping at the end to find Mr. Bateson recommending as a first step towards better things 'the conscious stimulation of a poetry-reading *élite*'.

A DICTIONARY OF THE UNDERWORLD

By Eric Partridge. *Routledge & Kegan Paul.* £2 10s.

A monstrous compilation of the cant words of crooks, beggars, tramps and prostitutes—cant being, as Eric Partridge has pointed out, not a language but a glossary of secret words for 'such processes as seem to the underworld important'—such as passing fake money, murdering, eating, drinking and being hanged. Mr. Partridge's etymology has come under heavy fire but no one can grudge him the respect his labour has earned. The book is a vast rubbish-heap full of glittering bones, fish-heads and carelessly discarded diamonds.

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